

JANUARY

10

ANIME • MANGA • SFX • JAPANESE POP CULTURE

AnimePX

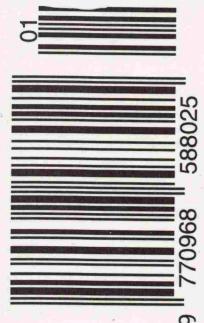


GIANT ROBO

ARMITAGE
III

ICZER ONE

GAINAX



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(U.S.)



... Already, it's being called the theft of the year

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One of the most important artefacts of Ebon history, The Key of Delhyread is worth well over a million credits. Its loss is a great blow to the World of Progress."

Mike Scope,
for Channel 19,
Third Eye News

PARENTAL
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JANUARY

10

ANIME FX

TEAM AFX

Helen McCarthy, Editor

Peter Goll, Production

Steve Kyte, Art Director

Jonathan Clements, Translator

Peter Evans, Away Team AFX

Masaaki Kato, Away Team AFX

WRITERS THIS ISSUE

Jo Carter, Jonathan Clements, Rory Donnelly, Peter Evans/Sakura Studio, Peter J. Evans, Carl Horn, Helen McCarthy, Jim McLennan, Chrysanthemum Mordin, Fred Patten, Julia Sertori, Jim Swallow, Paul Watson, Kam-Yim Wong, Jolyon Yates

ARTISTS THIS ISSUE

Steve Kyte, Nick Southam, Jolyon Yates

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Editorial correspondence to: ANIME FX, 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF, England. Tel: 0171 637 2587
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Subscription enquiries call: 01403 711511 or Fax: 01403 711521
U.S. readers contact Julie on Fax: (513) 353 3933, or write to:
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This is the Chinese character 'wan', meaning 'ending'; the Japanese reading is 'kan', and when you see it, it means you've reached the end of an article or instalment!

OTAKU VOCABULARY

You'll find some Japanese terms crop up again and again. Here are a few definitions:

ANIME Japanese animation

CHARA Character

KAWAII Cute

MANGA Japanese Comics

MECHA Mechanical object, ie robot, vehicle, weapon, etc.

OTAKU Anime fanboy/girl

OVA/OAV Original Video Animation, anime made for video

SEIYUU Anime voice actor

KONNICHWA!

I know we're starting a new year but I'd like to tell you about two very happy memories from the last months of the old one.

The first memory is the weekend of ReConTanimeTed, Birmingham's fourth anime convention. Almost 400 fans came from all over the UK, from Europe and even from Canada to enjoy anime and manga together. Steve and I were Guests of Honour for the second year running and we really enjoyed the event; meeting so many of our readers, both old friends and new faces, seeing the work on display in the artshow and the costumes in the masquerade and being part of everyone else's enjoyment of a weekend of fan fun.

Just two weeks later we went down to Plymouth in Devon as Guests of Honour at a much smaller event, the 130-strong general sf/media convention Armadacon 7. There were a surprising number of AFX readers here too, and we met one of our talented artists, Lisa Tse, as well as new AFX writer Kam-Yim Wong, whose first article on ICZER-1 is printed in this issue, and two students currently researching anime theses looking for some guidance. An anime programme was running for most of the con (thanks, Alastair!) and our talks - one each, one together - were attended not just by the anime fans, but by many of the non-otaku congoers who wanted to find out more about anime. Steve and I became aware at Armadacon of how much interest and how little information there is regarding anime and manga among sf and media fans. Anyone who likes BABYLON 5, DR. WHO, or RED DWARF may also like anime, and cons like Armadacon give them a chance to sample shows and talk to fans before they commit their time and money to a specialist con like ReConTanimeTed.

But that's not what made Armadacon such a special memory for us; it was the warm welcome of the Devon fans for all of us incomers, the atmosphere of friendliness, and the sheer insanity pervading the event. I'll never forget the last-night dinner, with forty-odd (very odd!) congoers and committee members, fellow GOHs Diane Duane and Peter Morwood, and us, giving an impromptu chamber version of THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW to the bemused staff of a small Italian restaurant.

If you make only one resolution this year, resolve to go to a convention. I can recommend it.

Yours animatedly,

Helen McCarthy
Editor



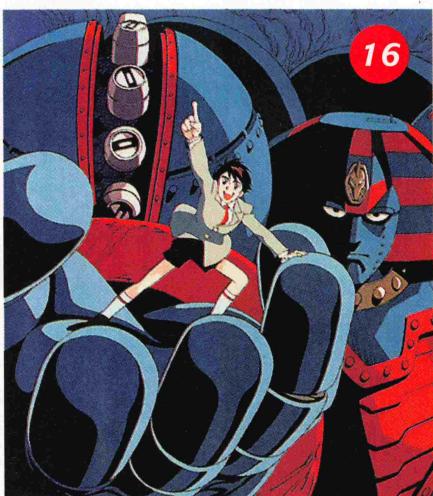
Right: ARMITAGE Ne-Chan by Steve Kyte
Front Cover: ARMITAGE III © PIONEER with thanks to Jo Jenkins for her kind assistance

SPECIAL THANKS to Gary Marshall for designing the GIANT ROBO feature

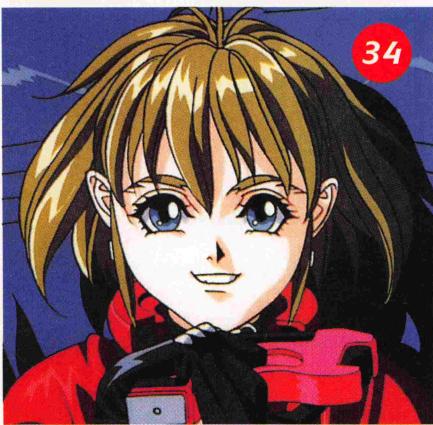
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newscan

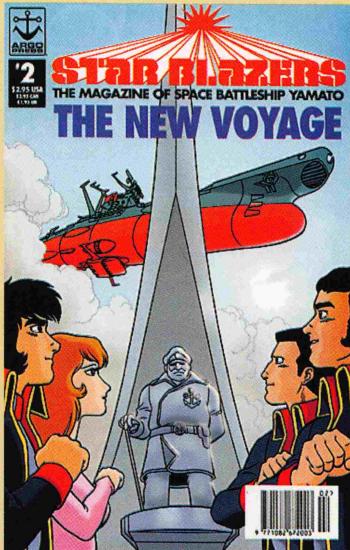
EUROPE

TONKAM ANNOUNCES FREEMAN DEAL

French publisher TONKAM has acquired the European rights for the entire catalogue of Hong Kong comic publisher FREEMAN. The company has already launched CYBER WEAPON Z on the French market and is planning further releases in the forthcoming months. Watch for more news!

TRASH COMES TO LONDON

Amy Yamada's acclaimed novel TRASH (US release reviewed in ANIME UK issue #17) is to be published in Britain in the spring of 1996 by Kodansha Europe. This emotive look at the life of a contemporary Japanese woman in Western society has so far been available only on import from specialist bookstores; if you've missed it before, don't miss it now!



STAR BLAZERS WORLD-WIDE

The STAR BLAZERS magazine produced by Studio Go! for Argo Press is enjoying success in the UK, as well as in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, with launches in Poland, Cyprus, Singapore and other countries coming soon - proof of the classic show's enduring popularity. The magazine, sold through mainstream retailers, costs £1.95 in the UK and contains comic strips, factual articles and readers' letters, as well as details on where to buy STAR BLAZERS/YAMATO merchandise.

ANIMANIA GROWS IN GERMANY

Yes, there are more anime and manga fans in Germany all the time, and ANIMANIA is there to keep



USA

1996: THE YEAR OF THE MECH

US Manga Corps plan to make this the year that the real robot makes an impact on the West. Two major

TV series, VOTOMS and PATLABOR - and their related OAVs - are scheduled for release on videotape commencing later in 1996. These are two of the most eagerly awaited titles among hardcore fans, and their acquisition indicates a broadening of the US market into new areas. Is this the 'death of Cute' as fans tire of the wave of fluffy, brightly-coloured OAV charas which has been so prominent of late? Maybe not, but it's certainly a welcome reminder that good stories



them informed. Glossy colour covers, masses of pictures, excellent features (some of them translated from English-language magazines, including ours, so that non-English speaking readers don't miss out on information!) and advertisements for anime sources in Germany are just a few of the reasons why many German fans are Animaniacs. Bimonthly from Wierd Visions Media.

UK CLOSES DOWN FOR CHRISTMAS

December and January are traditionally 'quiet' (i.e. dead) months in the UK video trade. This month sees just two releases from Manga Video, the live-action ZEIRAM and PROJECT A-KO 5 (i.e. A-KO THE VERSUS) BATTLE 1: GREY SIDE; meanwhile Kiseki report further unforeseen delays to their release plans, with SOL BIANCA and THE COCKPIT held up until the New Year. Next month things promise to be livelier, with new releases from Manga, Kiseki and East2West and the long-awaited Pioneer release of ARMITAGE III.

ANIME ON TV

Channel 4 has recommended its midnight Saturday screenings of Manga Video releases; DOOMED MEGALOPOLIS kicked off in November.

NEW MD AT MANGA UK

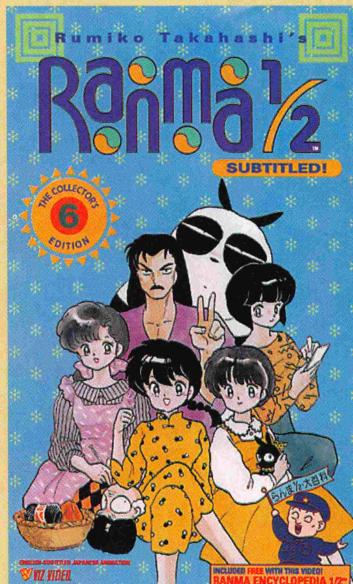
Following Andy Frain's departure from the company, former sales director Mike Preece has been appointed managing director of Manga Entertainment Ltd.



Right: VOTOMS (Top) and PATLABOR coming from US Manga Corps.

newscan

and good characterisation will always find an audience. And USMC's plans to please their fans aren't on hold until the big robots come through. Those who prefer subtitles for their English versions might like to know that their current release of *HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN 3 & 4* is in just this format. Also subtitled from USMC, Satoshi Urushibara's lances'n'lechery epic *LEGEND OF LEMNEAR*, and for sf fans the action-adventure *GARAGA*, the story of the crew of starship XeBeC and their struggle for survival after crashlanding on planet Garaga, home of dinosaur-like monsters and powerful ape-creatures. In February they release Koichi Ohata's new OAV *CYBERNETICS GUARDIAN*



- look out for more details next issue! - and in March a supergals double presents *IRIA* and *ARIEL*. To come on the dubbing front: *RECORD OF LODOSS WAR* and *LA BLUE GIRL*.

RANMA FIRST TV SERIES - THE END

On video, that is, as Viz Video releases Volume 6 of the *Ranma 1/2* Perfect Collection featuring the series' final four episodes, each in 2 versions - with English subtitles and in Japanese only - and backed up by extensive liner notes. Distributed through CPM, available in the USA from good retailers or via Viz Shop-By-Mail, in the UK through specialist shops on import or from Shop-By-Mail.

CONGRATULATIONS ANIMERICA

As we went to press we got the news that ANIMERICA have followed in our footsteps as winners of this year's Tezuka Award at ANIMEast. Congratulations to Trish, Julie and the team at Viz!

.. and CONGRATULATIONS ANIME HASSHIN!

Fanclub Anime Hasshin (profiled last issue) won two Tezuka Awards at ANIMEast this year; the club kept the "Best Anime or Manga Fan Club" title it won last year, and its quarterly newsletter THE ROSE won the title of "Best Anime or Manga Fanzine". If you haven't yet checked out this fine club you can do so by writing (with two IRCs from outside the USA or an ssae within) to: Lorraine Savage, Anime Hasshin, P.O. Box 391036, Cambridge, MA 02139, USA.

LASERDISC IMAGES

Image Entertainment and Central Park Media have released four classic titles on laserdisc: *PROJECT A-KO THE VERSUS*, *GALL FORCE*: *EARTH CHAPTER*, *BLUE SONNET* and *DETONATOR ORGUN*. All feature the original Japanese voice-tracks with English subtitles; A-KO is a deluxe presentation featuring original Japanese soundtrack on digital tracks, English dialogue on analogue tracks and English subtitles as closed captions.

SHOJO MANGA FROM VIZ

Continuing its support for the genre, Viz releases *FOUR SHOJO STORIES* in graphic novel format on 6th February. Shojo gods Shio Sato, Moto Hagio and Keiko Nishi are showcased in four stories brought together in this format for the first time - *THE CHANGELING* and *THEY WERE ELEVEN*, two science fiction stories with thoughtful conclusions and fine character development, *PROMISE*, a story of supernatural friendship coming through in time of crisis, and *SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE*, in which a husband has to confront the truth of his own feelings.

ANIME AS ART

Major US distributor Central Park Media has acquired the respected animation art dealer Animated Collectibles, and celebrated in style with an exhibition of anime cel artwork and production drawings in New York at the Bess Cutler gallery from Nov 11 - Dec 30. Tezuka, Miyazaki, Otomo and Ohata are some of the big names whose art will be on sale through this new CPM division, which will continue to operate as Animated Collectibles and to offer the same service and expertise as before in Western animation

JAPAN

GODZILLA DIES

That's what it says on the PR handout for the 22nd Godzilla movie, *GODZILLA VS. DESTROYER*, out in Tokyo on December 9th. But this is Big G's fourth 'death', so the rumours may turn out to be greatly exaggerated. If, for example, the much-discussed American *GODZILLA* movie never gets off the shelf, the producers at Toho may go shopping for a script that starts with another resurrection ... For the moment, though, the mighty radioactive saurian will face his most fearsome foe on the Tokyo Bay waterfront, providing much-needed publicity for the area after the cancellation of the World City Expo which was to have been held there this year. The script had actually called for Godzilla to storm the World City Expo site, but following the cancellation this was amended to feature a battle with Destroyer 'in the waterfront area', though the exhibition buildings and new Yurikamome transit system are

clearly visible in the background. Godzilla also made a guest appearance at the opening ceremony for the transit system; for once, no damage was recorded.

art, as well as bringing Japanese works in this field to the attention of the art establishment. There are also plans to add comic art to the expanding catalogue. More details direct from CPM.

NEW OAVS

DARK BLUE FLEET

Those who enjoyed the tense alternate-future manga *THE SILENT SERVICE* should look out for *SHIN KAITEI GUNKAN*, out in December on laserdisc and video. Based on the 1963 live-action film *ATRAGON*, which is being re-released on video to coincide with the new OAV series, it tells the story of a mysterious ship encased in a giant iceberg, and the UN force sent to investigate. From Toho, fourpart OAV series.

POLICE ACTION

TAIHO SHICHAUZO 4, out this month, claims to have 'the biggest-scale action scenes of the entire



Right: Promotional flyer for *GODZILLA VS DESTROYER*

newscan



series'. Fans of the Tokyo Policewoman Duo might also like to know that plans for a mystery project known only as 'TAIHO WORLD' are being progressed right now.

SHAMANIC PRINCESS

A new 6-part OAV series is in the works from a team used to producing hits - Kyoko Ishida teams up with the director of CRAYON SHIN-CHAN to work on an original plot by one of the creators of IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLOR. Heroine Tiara is a shaman; in her world everyone

has a 'familiar' in the parallel universe of Guardian World, from which they draw their powers. Tiara's familiar is cute, furry Japoro. Voice actors haven't yet been selected; more news when it's available.

TV TO OAV

Two hit series have new OAVs out now. AKAZUKIN CHACHA is a three-parter based on characters and situations from Min Sugihara's TV success. Chacha and chums find themselves up against the best that Momiji College have to offer, in the form of super-powered spy in schoolgirl's clothing Poppy. NINKU pits the TV series team against a gang of pirates (instead of an evil empire, as in the series). It's four years after the TV series ended, and the friends are looking forward to a peaceful life in their quiet home village of Amahara; but a new menace to its tranquillity brings them back into the old life.

MY MARI

Victor Entertainment have already turned this popular manga from Shueisha's WEEKLY JUMP magazine into a radio drama (broadcast between July and September 1995). Now a three-part OAV series is to follow. A mixture of sf, comedy and George Bernard Shaw's PYGMALION, MY MARI tells the story of high-school genius Hiroshi, who makes a

super-android, Mari, in the image of his sexy partner in the school Tennis Circle. However, he's reckoned without that well-known plot spoiler the Inquisitive Little Sister - his - who is determined to get in on the



action and changes his plans in ways he could never have envisaged. Directed by Tomorui Mochizuki, whose previous credits include RANMA 1/2, THIS IS GREENWOOD and I CAN SEE THE OCEAN.

SMALL SCREEN SCANS

SWORD OF RURO

RURO NO KENSHIN, the comic first serialised in SHONEN JUMP, is now a TV series, and it premieres on Fuji TV in January 96. (If you can't wait, the first seven collected volumes are already out from Shueisha.) Director Furuhashi (TAIHO SCHICHAU), RANMA 1/2, FATAL FURY 2) was still unable to

Broadcast on the WOWOW satellite channel, the series is set on a trampship working the route between Earth and the newly-colonised Mars. It's 2064.

The ship is heading back to Earth with a crew of six and four passengers when it's hit by a one-metre meteoroid.



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SWORD OF RURO

we went to press, but stories are by a team including Michiru Shimada of TAIHO SCHICHAUZ and CYBER FORMULA GPX fame, and animation by Studio Gallop. The story is set around the 1860s, at the turn of the Meiji Era. The Government has ended two centuries of rule by the sword, outlawing the samurai prerogative of summary execution. Samurai Kenshin Himuro is made masterless, becoming the last Ronin, by the last execution before the new rules come into force. By day he's an 'ordinary' child, by night he becomes a living blade of vengeance, the last surviving exponent of the deadly Kamiya sword school. It's not known yet how closely the anime will follow the plot of the manga, but it seems a safe bet that cute fluffy animals will be thin on the ground.

CITYHUNTER SPECIAL

Subtitled THE SECRET SERVICE, this has Ryo teaming up with the beautiful (surprise, surprise!) agent Ana, of the Republic of Gainam's secret service. Gainam's leader is visiting Japan and she suspects that there's going to be trouble. Akio Otsuka guest stars as the President of Gainam.

SPACE TRADER REMNANT SIX

Broadcast on the WOWOW satellite channel, the series is set on a trampship working the route between Earth and the newly-colonised Mars. It's 2064.



SHAMANIC PRINCESS - TIARA and familiar JAPORO

newscan

The 'remnant' - two crew members, three members of the Solar Defence Force and the obligatory cute kid - are left with the job of getting home to Earth. This 'APOLLO 13' meets 'BABYLON 5' scenario is directed by Kunio Manda, and he's backed by a team of seriously big guns - executive producer Mamoru Oshii (who dreamed up the title as a Biblical reference), designer Shoji Kawamori and with music by Kenji Kawai.

FAMOUS DETECTIVE CONAN

Premiering on 8th January 1996, based on a manga from Weekly Shonen Sunday, this features a body-switching primary school kid, Conan Edogawa. His name is a mixture of two famous detective writers from the UK and Japan, Arthur Conan Doyle and Rampo Edogawa, and he can transfer into Shinichi, a highschooler who's also a bit of a sleuth. His kid-voice is Minami Takayama and his older self is voiced by Kappai Yamaguchi.

ESCAFLOWNE OF THE SKY

Shojo Kawamori and Yuuki Nobuteru are promising fans of MACROSS that they won't be disappointed in the new TV series - it will have 'songs and robots' aplenty. In a demonstration of the dangers of getting too hooked on the occult, the heroine, tarot-loving highschool girl Hitomi Kanzaki (yes, she wears a sailor suit!) gets dragged into an alternative world by Van Slazar De Fanel, 15-year-old king of the beleaguered kingdom of Fanelia. It is being threatened by the evil empire of Zaibahha, in particular its sexually ambiguous, devastatingly attractive knight Dilandau Albatou, and naturally the one thing that can save Fanelia is a fifteen-year-old Japanese schoolgirl. There is also a MACROSS-style love triangle in prospect, with the third point being Van Slazar's besotted 13-year-old bodyguard Merle. Comic relief comes in the shape of Hitomi's ally the Mole Man, and of course there's a huge robot, the title mecha - Escaflowne.

RADIO WAVES

Japanese anime fans might never find the time to watch TV if they listened to all the anime-related radio shows. Radio is fast becoming the most popular testbed for prospective anime stories, allowing companies to test out a formula and combinations of actors and actresses in a much cheaper, faster format than on TV or video. Awake at one am in Tokyo? Tune in to Mariko Kouda's radio show on 1179Khz and hear seiyuu chat about anything and



everything, with special guest appearances by Kaori Minami covering the Kansai area for the show. Turn to 1134Khz on Saturday at 11 for Komoto's Bandai Playing Night, half an hour of Bandai advertorial from the Parachute Team (!) Two hours later on the same band you can find TOKYO SHADOW, a radio drama tipped for animation soon, while at 10 pm there's Ai Oriksa and Yumi Takada on "The Secrets of TENCHI MUYO!". Half past midnight Wednesday/Thursday on 954Khz tunes you in to the MADARA PROJECT show, and if you want to hear the thoughts of Hayao Miyazaki you can tune in at 9.00 on Sunday on 1242 KHz.

BIG SCREEN RUMOURS

Our spies tell us that there are plans mooted for a cinema release of TENCHI MUYO! And for those wondering whether the MACROSS PLUS movie with its 20 minutes of extra footage will ever come to the

FAMOUS DETECTIVE CONAN

of an elite five-piece cyborg enforcer team - Vargi, Rebecca, Shiori, Midi and Merrivale. They live in an undersea base, protecting the remnants of mankind from any threats to their survival, over two centuries after most of humanity fled Earth for the stars. If the CD version is well received an OAV will follow at the end of 1996.

TAKADA STARS ON CD-ROM

Fans of Akemi Takada should treat themselves to her CD-ROM collection MY STELLA, out now for the Mac and Photo-CD from Bandai Visual. It covers her character design and illustration work from CREAMY MAMI to PATLABOR and beyond. Bandai say it works best on a 16-inch colour monitor, and included in the highly reasonable 5800yen asking price is a soundtrack by Kenji Kawai, who produced the stunning score for GHOST IN THE SHELL.

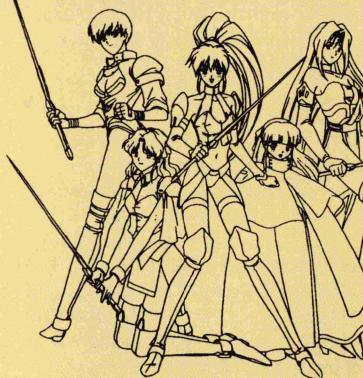
SO YOU WANT TO BE A SEIYUU?

Wannabe voice actors can enrol for training at a school with a 99% success rate in graduates finding work. The Yoyogi Animation Academy has been established for forty years and trains people for the anime industry; their past students work as narrators in documentaries and commercials, dubbing foreign films, or as anime voice actors. The Basic Curriculum covers these courses: Projection, Accent, Intonation, Elocution, Warming Up Exercises, Conveying Emotion, Scriptreading, Drama, Expressive Technique, Singing, Muscle Relaxation, Muscle Relaxation Through Dance, and Microphone Work. Once you've covered the basics there's an Applied Curriculum; you can study DJ Improvisation, Radio Drama, Announcing, Compering, Commercial Narration, Animation Dubbing, Film Dubbing, Advanced Microphone Work, Rules of Floor Management, Theoretical and Practical Stage Management, and Dramatic Improvisation. To help you get that all-important first job the Applied Curriculum also offers Audition Technique (including dummy runs to build your confidence), Resume Presentation and Making A Demo Tape. Other courses include Guidelines for Voice Actors, Technical Terminology and miscellaneous lectures on voice-acting and other topics. The drawbacks? Well, it's expensive, and if you're a UK student there is no chance that your local authority would consider you eligible for a grant to study

UK, prepare to wonder about ARMITAGE III as well - a similar plan for an extended theatrical version of the OAV series is said to be under discussion, once again with about 20 minutes of added-value footage.

CD MULTIMEDIA

CYBERTEAM VARGI'S ANGELS is a six-disc CD drama release, another uniquely Japanese tryout format. Big-name seiyuu like Aya Hisakawa (Vargi) and Kotono Mitsuuchi (Rebecca) star in this story



Toshihiro Hirano's black fantasy examined by KAM-YIM WONG

NOTE : To date, I have found three different spellings of the word Cthulhu, in relation to the ICZER phenomena; Cthulhu (from the realm of H. P. Lovecraft, and used in the anime subtitles), Kthulhu (from the translated GOLDEN WARRIOR ICZER-1 manga), and Cthuwulf (found in the FIGHT!! ICZER-1 Perfect Collection, and used by U.S. Manga Corps in the description of ICZER-3).

I have used 'Kthulhu' throughout.

INTRODUCTION

In deep space, a ship wanders through the endless void of time. On board the ship is an entire race in cold sleep. The leader of the Kthulhu, a young woman with deep red eyes called Violet, looks towards the stars, in despair at their seemingly endless journey for a new homeland. As she wonders if it is the fate of her people to die in their ship, a golden electrical energy force surrounds the vessel, disrupting its passage in space and tearing it open. A mysterious golden spirit calls from space and tells the terrified Violet that she will make her dreams come true...

On Earth, a man is running desperately through the deserted streets. He stumbles, and crashes to the ground. When he looks up, the adversary he has been hopelessly trying to evade is standing in front of him; a woman with golden hair, and pointed ears, her eyes in shadow. The man's face contorts in fear and pain, but he is unable to voice his terror as the Bedem, the monster that possessed him, explodes from his body, intent on doing battle with the golden haired stranger. The woman leaps up, blue energy



'From out of the cold Darkness..., She comes..., To the area of Space held by the Kthulhu. Why has she come? Because that is her Destiny...,'



crackling from her fist, and she shoots the Bedem, obliterating it into glittering motes of light. She lands, with the particles of light falling behind her like drops of rain...

In 1985, AIC released Toshihiro Hirano's 3 part OVA titled **FIGHT!! ICZER-1 (TATAKAE!! ICZER-1)**. It was Hirano's directorial debut; he also wrote, and designed the anime. It is regarded by many in both East and West as a minor classic of the SF and horror genres. The story revolves around the beautiful alien battle android Iczer-1, and her human partner, a girl named Nagisa Kano, who must fight the Kthulhu together in order to save the Earth, and to defeat the evil entity known as Big Gold. Nagisa is just an ordinary schoolgirl who never eats breakfast, is often late for school, and daydreams in class. Iczer-1 is "an artificial humanoid created by the Kthulhu", a lone rebel who must fight her own people in order to free them from Big Gold's slavery. The story itself is dark and many-layered, on the grand scale; humanity by itself, cannot hope to face the alien invasion. No matter how far man's technology advances, there is always the unknown, things that we cannot possibly conceive, which can overcome us. In the anime, Fuji-chigo (Fuji-1) and Fuji-nigo (Fuji-2) are Earth's main military defence forces, the ultimate in military hardware. The alien invaders destroy them without even raising a sweat. In reality, we have sent man to the

moon and created computers that send messages around the world in seconds, but we have no control over things such as the weather, or the one of the greatest killers in the developed countries: cancer.

One of the Kthulhu weapons, the Bedem, infests the bodies of its victims, a parallel with disease. It takes a being created from a fusion of Kthulhu technology and the human spirit to overcome the Kthulhu; we use science, as it helps us to understand, and maybe to face the unknown.

On a more personal level, it's a voyage of discovery for both Iczer-1 and Nagisa; neither of them are a given a choice in what fate has laid in store for them. From the moment of her birth, Iczer-1 is fighting against her own people for reasons unknown to her. There is a 10 year interval between her escape from the Kthulhu ship and her appearance on Earth. In that time, she has been battling the Kthulhu



on different planets in other star systems, losing her initial battles, but gaining experience and victories as time progresses. When she finally arrives on Earth, Iczer-1 chooses

Nagisa to be her partner, and from that moment on Nagisa loses the world that she loved and knew.

SYNOPSIS

As well as the original 3 part OAV, there is also a 'movie', known as the **ICZER-1 SPECIAL EDITION**. It consists of an edited compilation of the 3 episodes, with some added scenes to serve as scene joiners. The following synopsis is for the 'movie'.

As the Kthulhu ship drifts through space, it is attacked by Big Gold, an evil entity who turns the Kthulhu race into an invasion force. The leader of the Kthulhu, a woman called Violet, becomes a minion of Big Gold, and is renamed Sir Violet. Ten years later, a golden haired stranger arrives on Earth. For

Nagisa Kano, it is just another day, until she happens to come across a strange looking woman on her way to school. From then on, the world goes mad in Nagisa's eyes, and nowhere is safe, not even home. As Nagisa is about to be killed by the Bedem/her parents, the woman she saw earlier comes to her rescue, and introduces herself as Iczer-1. She tells Nagisa that she has been chosen to become her partner, and asks her to synchronize with her, but Nagisa is reluctant to fight, until the Delos Theta mecha arrives on Earth, piloted by Commander Cobalt. Iczer-1 calls to the Iczer Robo, which teleports through sub space and transports Nagisa into the chest of Iczer Robo. Through Nagisa's desire for revenge, the Delos Theta is destroyed, but the victory is hollow, and Iczer-1 holds Nagisa as she weeps.

The Kthulhu fortress Nova lands on Earth. The commander of the Nova, Cobalt's lover Cepia, now burns with hatred for what Iczer-1 did to the Delos Theta, and vows to avenge her dead friend. On Earth, Nagisa wants no part in Iczer-1's fight with the Kthulhu, so Iczer-1 lets her go, whilst she investigates the fortress. As Nagisa wanders around her deserted city, she is attacked by Bedem, but is protected by the ring that Iczer-1 gave her. She encounters Sayoko and her mother, and they take refuge in Nagisa's house, but the Bedem are already there. Iczer-1 encounters two, Void & Boid, and just as she dispatches the second one, a woman similar to Iczer-1 appears, and proclaims herself to be Iczer-2, Iczer-1's little sister. Iczer-2 injures Iczer-1, and torments her.

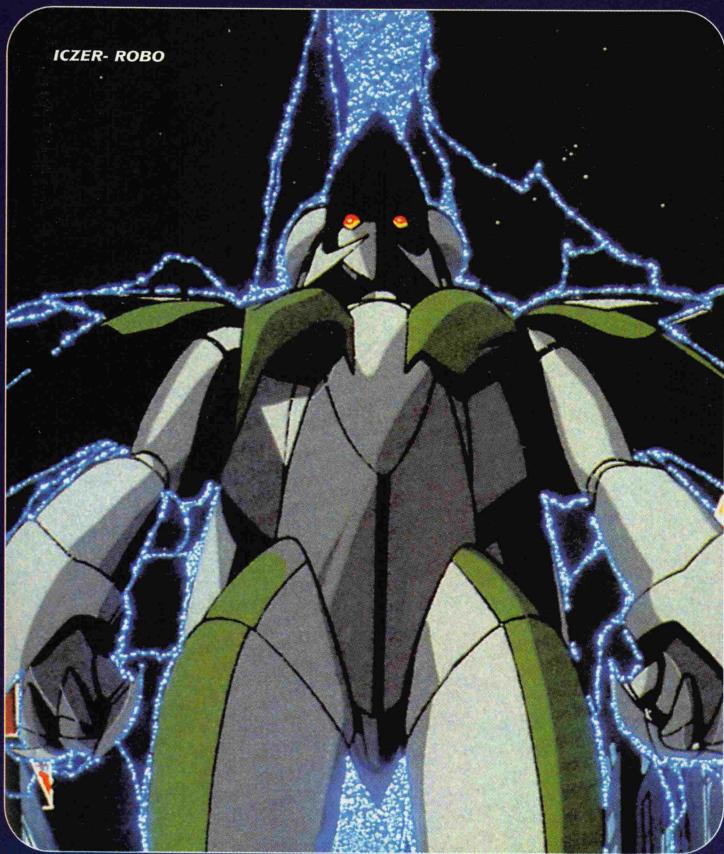
As the parasitic Bedem in Sayoko's mother erupts from her body, Nagisa's will to fight calls the Iczer Robo from sub space, destroying the Bedem, and giving Iczer-1 a reprieve from Iczer-2. The Iczer Sigma, piloted by Iczer-2 and Cepia, appears to do battle with Iczer Robo. The Iczer Robo is beaten to the ground by Iczer Sigma, and all seems lost, until Sayoko runs out of her hiding place; Iczer-2 decides to step on Sayoko out of sheer cruelty, to the horror of both Nagisa



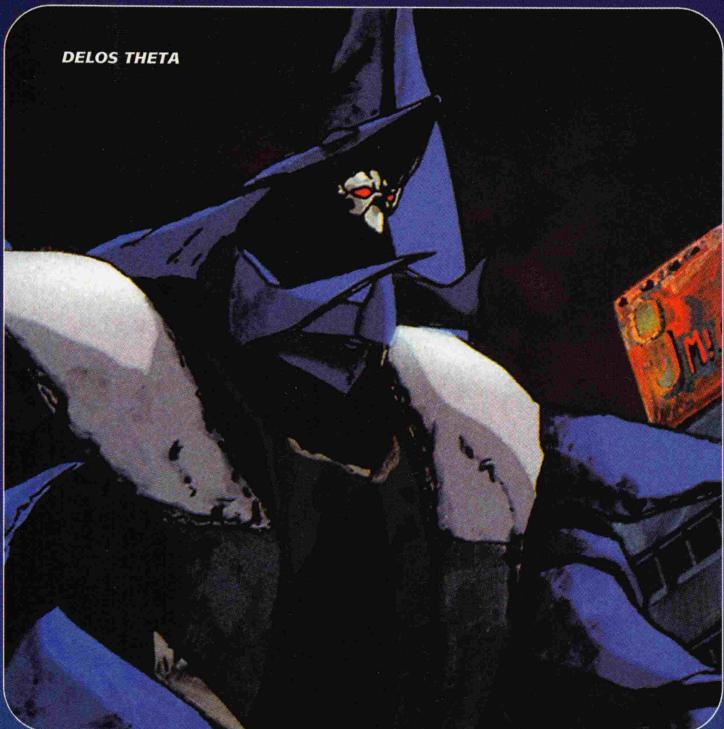
ICZER-1



NAGISA KANO



ICZER- ROBO



DELOS THETA



ICZER-2



COBALT

and Cepia. Nagisa's sorrow fills the Iczer Robo with tremendous power, which then defeats the Iczer Sigma. Iczer-2 escapes, just as the Iczer Sigma blows up, along with Cepia. Nagisa's grief is dispelled when she hears from Iczer-1 that Sayoko is safe.

While Iczer-2 is recovering in a solvent bath in the fortress Nova, she ponders on her defeat, and comes to the conclusion that Nagisa is stronger than Cepia. She decides to kidnap Nagisa with the help of the monstrous Reddas and Blueba. Sir Violet meets with Big Gold. The alien leader is angry with Sir Violet's excuses, and chooses to get rid of her avatar. As Sir Violet dies, that fateful day flashes before her eyes, revealing Iczer-1's birth and escape from the Kthulhu ship. On Earth, Nagisa and Iczer-1 enjoy a moment's peace. As Nagisa promises to fight along side Iczer-1 against Big Gold, Iczer-2 appears with Reddas and Blueba. They attack, and while Reddas surrounds Iczer-1 with subspace, Blueba and Iczer-2 leave with an unconscious Nagisa. Iczer-1 finally defeats Reddas, but it costs her all her strength, and she collapses.

Nagisa awakens within the fortress Nova, where Big Gold reveals her true form to the girl. In spite of Iczer-2's threats, Nagisa refuses to become her partner, but she surrenders to her fear, and calls out to Iczer-1. Prompted by Nagisa's cry, the Iczer Robo appears where Iczer-1 has fallen, teleports her into the cockpit, and reappears on Earth, next to the fortress Nova. Iczer-1 awakens to the realization that Nagisa is calling for help, and the Iczer Robo storms the fortress. When Iczer One arrives, she is attacked and overwhelmed by Blueba and the Bedem. Nagisa walks out of the shadows, to where Iczer-1 has fallen, but her hopes are dashed as she realizes that Nagisa's eyes are dead. Nagisa shoots Iczer-1 in the chest. Iczer-2 appears, and gloats over her apparent victory. As Iczer-2 orders Nagisa to kill Iczer-1, Nagisa pleads with Iczer-1 to kill her, as she has no control over her body. After an agonizing decision, Iczer-1 fires, mortally wounding

Nagisa. Nagisa is herself again, and before she dies, she tells Iczer-1 to win.

Iczer-1 is overwhelmed with grief, and oblivious to the Bedem and Blueba. Nagisa's spirit leaves her body, and as she joins with Iczer-1, Iczer-1 realizes that THIS is synchronization. She easily defeats Blueba and the Bedem, and reluctantly kills Iczer-2. She then teleports to Big Gold's chamber, and with Nagisa's spirit, destroys Big Gold's main body, a super computer. After the destruction of Big Gold, Iczer-1 stands over the Earth with Nagisa cradled in her arms, and fulfills Nagisa's final wish.

CHARACTERS IN FIGHT!! ICZER-1

THE KTHULHU RACE -originally a peaceful all-female humanoid race with no world to call home, who wander the universe in search of a world in which they can live in peace. After encountering Big Gold in deep space, she turns them into an evil invasion force. All members of the Kthulhu race have red eyes.

NAGISA KANO -an ordinary Japanese school girl, whose world is turned upside-down, after meeting Iczer-1. She is the only human being who can synchronize with Iczer-1, and it is her destiny to teach Iczer-1 the reasons why she has to fight her own people.

BIG GOLD - an evil omnipotent entity of artificial intelligence, who takes over the Kthulhu race, and is 'mother' to Iczer-1 and Iczer-2.

ICZER-1 - an artificial humanoid created by the Kthulhu, who is awakened ('born'), when Big Gold takes over the Kthulhu ship; she flees, and it is her destiny to fight against her own people, in order to defeat Big Gold. She is the eldest 'daughter' of Big Gold, and her 'alter ego' is Iczer Robo. Her full potential is only realized when she synchronizes with a human heart. Although she is seen as Big Gold's eldest 'daughter', there may have been other Iczer-1's (called Iczer-1[a] & Iczer-1[b]), who would have been created from the



CEPIA



SIR VIOLET

same 'template' as Iczer-1.

ICZER-2 - an artificial humanoid created by Big Gold, whose sole purpose in being is to kill her onesama ('big sister'), Iczer-1. She is evil, and Big Gold's second 'daughter', and her 'alter ego' is Iczer Sigma. After she is killed by Iczer-1, Neos Gold resurrects her, and in effect, Neos Gold is also her 'mother'.

SIR VIOLET - the leader of the Kthulhu, prior to them meeting Big Gold. As a safeguard should she herself die in mid-journey, Sir Violet designed an android with the power to lead her people -an android named Iczer-1. When the Kthulhu ship is attacked by Big Gold, Big Gold awakens Iczer-1 (therefore giving 'life' to her), and Sir Violet's spirit is consumed by Big Gold, who needs souls to sustain her consciousness: Sir Violet then becomes an extension of Big Gold.

CEPIA - a member of the Kthulhu race, who becomes Iczer-2's partner after the death of her lover Cobalt.

COBALT - a member of the Kthulhu race, and commander of the Delos Theta mecha, who is killed after her encounter with Iczer-1.

BLUEBA & REDDAS - two mechanical/organic constructs, who are under the command of Iczer-2.

BOID/VOID - mechanical/organic

constructs developed to fight against Iczer-1.

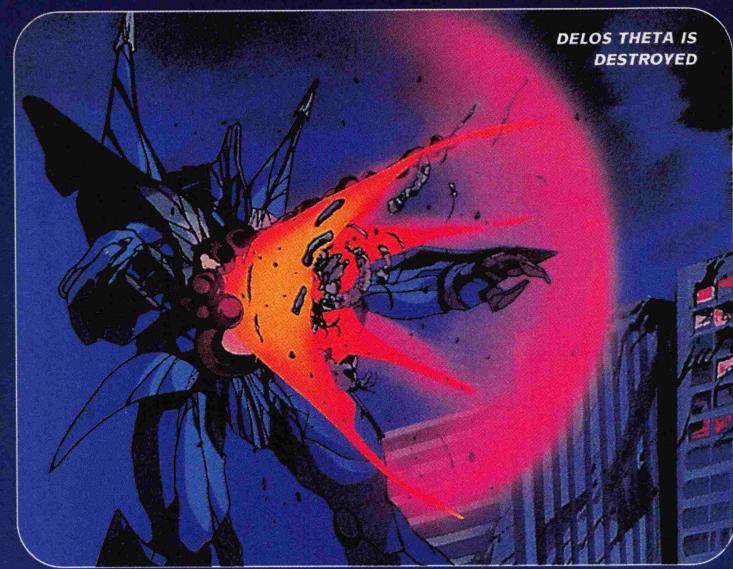
BEDEM - the Kthulhu's primary invasion force used on Earth. These beings are parasitic monsters engineered to infest humans, and once a human is invaded, death is the only cure.

CAST

Iczer-1	Yuriko YAMAMOTO
Iczer-2	Keiko TODA
Cobalt	Hiroko EMORI
Nagisa Kano	Mayumi SHOO
Big Gold/Sir Violet (male)	Kaneto SHIOZAWA
Sir Violet (female)	Sumi SHIMAMOTO
Cepia	Arisa ANDOU
Sayoko	Naoko WATANABE
Sayoko's mother	Mika DOI

THE CTHULHU MYTHOS

At first glance, the only thing that relates the anime with H. P. Lovecraft's gothic realm is the name of Iczer-1's race. There are no direct comparisons, but as you peel off the various layers, Lovecraft's influence can be seen. To be able to explain the Cthulhu Mythos, and how the anime relates to it, would take an article much larger than this, so the best way to find out more is to read some of his work. The CALL OF CTHULHU™ Role-Play Game Book is also an interesting reference.



ICZER SIGMA



IN RELATION TO THE MANGA

At present, there are two different ICZER-1 mangas. Neither of them deal with the actual anime, and both were written after the anime release. GOLDEN WARRIOR ICZER-1 (book 1 of which has been translated into English) is the story of Iczer-1's past, of how she got her powers, and of her initial skirmishes with her own people. It is set 10 years prior to the events depicted in the FIGHT!! ICZER-1 anime. After her escape from the Kthulhu ship, she crash lands on the planet of Ishua, where the Kthulhu already have a strong stranglehold. There is also an ICZER-1 OAV manga (also known as the LEGEND OF ICZER-1), which is set in an alternate ICZER universe. This, unfortunately, has not been translated, so I have had trouble understanding what it's about, but it seems that the three Iczer sisters have joined forces.

THE SEQUEL ?

ADVENTURE!! ICZER-3 (BOUKEN!! ICZER-3) was originally a series of audiobooks, released in Japan in 1989, wherein Iczer-3 arrives on Earth to fight off an invasion of insects with the now-married Nagisa. When the decision to make the anime was made, Hirano created a 6 part OAV, the second set in the ICZER series. It is set several decades after the events of the first anime. The basis of the story is that Iczer-1 has been going around the universe, seeking and destroying the rest of Big Gold's evil offspring/avatars, after her battle against Big Gold in FIGHT!! ICZER-1. One of these avatars, Neos Gold, has become powerful enough to



become a dangerous foe. Neos Gold and Iczer-1 have a huge fight (destroying a planetary system in the process), and Iczer-1 is seriously wounded. While Iczer-1 is recovering, Neos Gold despatches her four 'warrior daughters' (known as the 'Big Four') to attack earth, so Iczer-1 sends her baby sister, Iczer-3, to defend the earth. Iczer-3 is inexperienced, but she makes up for that with her endless enthusiasm; she is the diminutive version of Iczer-1! She has to team up with Nagisa Kano's grand-daughter, Nagisa Kazumi (who looks just like her grand-mother). The story is about Iczer-3's coming of age, of how she matures through her experiences with Nagisa Kazumi's guidance, and of the value of friendship. Unlike the first series, ADVENTURE!! ICZER-3 is an action comedy; the 'Lovecraftian' horror is missing. Those expecting the same drama and high tension found in the first series maybe a little disappointed. There are a lot of fighting scenes, and some very funny moments, but the dark and moody feel of the first OAV is missing. There is little character exploration, and the feeling of loneliness of the original is not even present. There are some particularly unpleasant and bloody scenes, but with a character as cute as Iczer-3, I find it hard to see it as a horror/drama!

Eps 1 - Introducing Iczer-3! "Leave Earth to Me!"

Eps 2 - Bugs, Bugs, and Giant Bugs! Get 'Em with Iczer Robo!

Eps 3 - Wild Auntie! Love's Double Attack!

Eps 4 - Oh No! Two of Me! The Super-Rival, Atros.

Eps 5 - Big Trouble! Here Comes my Scary Older Sister, Iczer-2!

Eps 6 - Wow! Incredible! Stupendous! Final Battle of the Iczers.

ICZER GIRL ICZELION



AND FINALLY...

The final(?) installment to the ICZER saga, is ICZER GIRL ICZELION. ICZELION started out as a radio broadcast in 1993, and in 1994, an anime was under production, episode two of which was released on laserdisc in March 95. Set after ADVENTURE!! ICZER-3, the story revolves around Nagisa Kai (another of Nagisa Kano's descendants), and her team of Iczelion warriors.

Unlike the first two OAV's, the Iczer sister's are no longer the protectors of the Earth; now, the Earth is defended by Nagisa, with the use of the form-fitting alien Iczelion battle suit, which bestows great powers upon the wearer.

MERCHANDISE

The anime FIGHT!! ICZER-1 is available (dubbed) on two tapes from U.S. Renditions.

The sequel ADVENTURE!! ICZER-3 is available (subtitled) on three tapes from U.S. Manga Corps, under the title of ICZER 3.

ICZER GIRL ICZELION is available (subtitled) from A.D. Vision, under the title of ICZELION.

The FIGHT!! ICZER ONE Perfect Collection book (128 pages, Kubo-Shoten/A.I.C., ISBN4-7659-0152-1 C0076 P3000E) is packed with colour stills from the anime, and there is an English language version available from the U.S. Renditions and Granata Press.

The ADVENTURE!! ICZER-3 B-Club Special book (112 pages, A.I.C./Bandai/Artnic, ISBN4-89189-159-9), has colour stills from all six episodes, character designs, cast interviews, and a short manga story.

There are also two anime CD's featuring the music from FIGHT!! ICZER-1, both re-issued 20/5/92:

TATAKAE!! ICZER-1 Special CD-1, FutureLand TYCY-5224, 15 tracks, 52:08

TATAKAE!! ICZER-1 Special CD-2, FutureLand TYCY-5225, 19 tracks, 60:32

CREW

Director **Toshihiro HIRANO**

Production **KUBO SHOTEN**

Planner **Kagio KUBO**

Original play **Rei ALAN**

Producer **Ryo MIURA**

Chara designs **Toshihiro HIRANO**

Conte (storyboards) **Toshihiro HIRANO**

..... **Akira NISHIMORI**

..... **Hiroaki OKAMI**

Mecha designs **Hiroaki INOKI**

Monster designs **Junichi WATANABE**

Art Director **Yasushi NAKAMURA**

Music Director **Yasunori HONDA**
 Music **Chumei WATANABE**
 Shooting Director **Takafumi ARAI**
 Background **Studio Tao**
 Designs **D.E.S.K.**
 Co-Operation **Legato Music**
 **Kubo Shoten**
 **A.I.C.**
 **Artnic**

TOSHIHIRO HIRANO - SELECTED ANIME WORKS

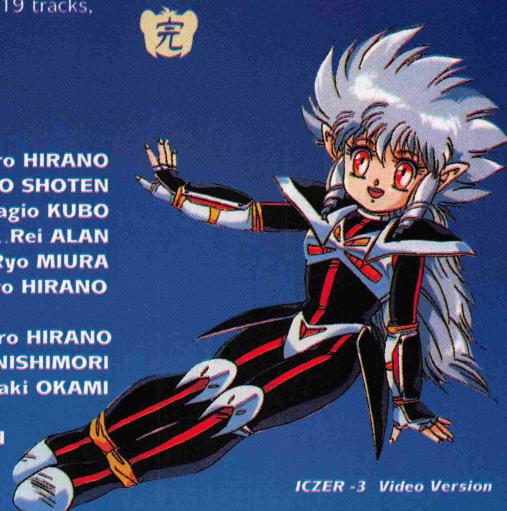
1984	MACROSS
1985	MEGAZONE 23 PART 1 TOBIKAGE
1985	FIGHT!! ICZER-ONE
1987	STAR OF DESTRUCTION DANGAIO
1987	DRAGONS HEAVEN
1988	VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU
1989	HADES PROJECT ZEO RYMER
1990	ADVENTURE!! ICZER-THREE
1994	ICZER GIRL ICZELION

TOSHIHIRO HIRANO - MANGA WORKS

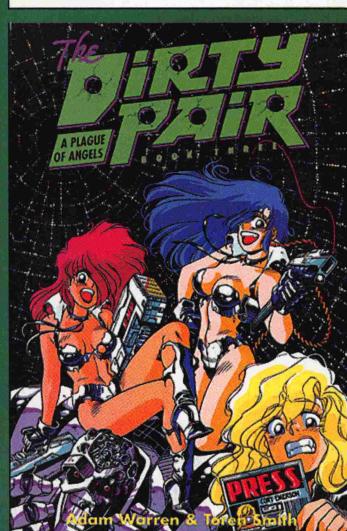
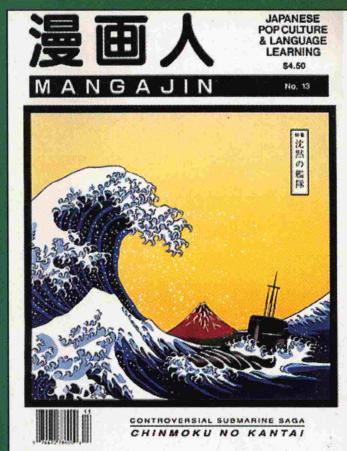
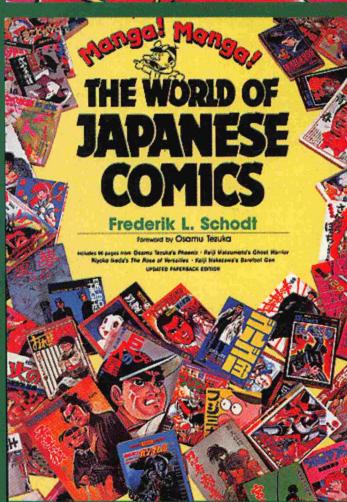
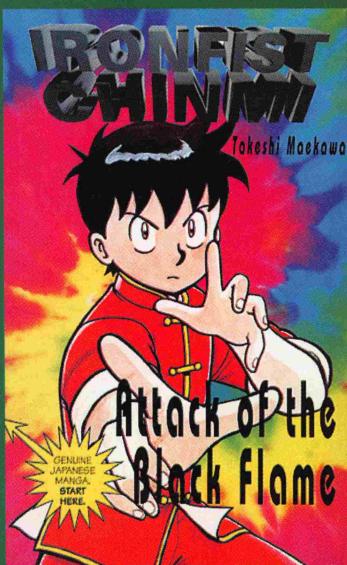
1988	GOLDEN WARRIOR ICZER-ONE co-produced with Motoyasu MORIKI published by Kubo Shoten Co. Ltd
1990	LEGEND OF ICZER published by Kadokawa Shoten Co. Ltd.
1991	DOLL published by Gakken Co. Ltd.
1994	GOLDEN WARRIOR ICZER-ONE English language version published by Antarctic Press

The author would like to acknowledge the following valuable sources of information :

*JAPANESE SEIYUU LIST compiled by Hotishi Doi
ANIME CD CYCLOPAEDIA compiled by Stephen Pearl
ANIME POCKET GUIDE compiled by Alan Takahashi
Thomas Collier & Nao Maebayashi for their help in translation. Chris K. Jackman for his general assistance.*



ICZER -3 Video Version



MANGA IN FOCUS

HOLIDAY SPECIAL: THE YULETIDE MANGA GIFT GUIDE

by Jim Swallow

Oh, the weather outside is frightful, but my comics inside are delightful ... As the year draws to a close and overindulgence, manga readers and their families might be stuck for a gift or two in the run-up to Christmas. So here's a handy guide to pick the ideal manga comicbook for that troublesome someone who's just so hard to buy for ...

FOR THE PRETEENS AND BEYOND

For the younger manga reader, or for a first-timer's introduction, Bloomsbury Publishing's IRONFIST CHINMI series is a good start. The first six volumes of this kung fu adventure saga set in feudal China (KUNG FU BOY, JOURNEY TO MOUNT SHEN, VICTORY FOR THE SPIRIT, LEAP OF FAITH, ATTACK OF THE BLACK FLAME and BLIND FURY) follow the adventures of teenage martial artist Chinmi. Priced at £3.99 and on sale in high street bookstores, this lightweight action-comedy is an enjoyable primer for the manga medium.

FOR THE NEO-FAN

For the comics reader interested in finding out a little more about the manga style, a good choice is a few issues of the manga anthology titles currently on sale in specialty comic stores. Manga Publishing's monthly MANGA MANIA carries three stories, including Katsuhiro Otomo's landmark production AKIRA. Currently AKIRA is backed up with the pseudomanga title DIRTY PAIR : SIM HELL (based on the popular anime) and the Hiroshi Takashige/Ryoji Minagawa action story STRIKER. Alternatively, American translation studio Viz Communications' anthology MANGA VIZION also provides a trio of ongoing stories, including Rumiko Takahashi's comedy, drama and romance-based RUMIC THEATRE, Ryoichi Ikegami's historical epic SAMURAI CRUSADER, and Kei Kusonoki's horror tale OGRE SLAYER. Together, both books give a taster of some of manga's diversity and scope.

FOR THE MANGA CONNOISSEUR

For the manga fan who has everything, Frederik L. Schodt's MANGA! MANGA! THE WORLD OF JAPANESE COMICS is everything for the manga fan. While it's a tad out of date (the last edition was in 1987), and a little difficult to find, MANGA! MANGA! is the best English language guide to comics from the Far East. No manga devotee should be without this indispensable historical, cultural and instructive guide. (Published by Kodansha)

International, available on order from most large bookstores.)

FOR THE JAPANESE-LANGUAGE STUDENT

For the studious linguist out to improve his or her grasp of Japanese and enjoy entertaining manga at the same time, a subscription to MANGAJIN magazine is a fine gift. Each issue of the magazine uses translated sections from popular manga strips (anything from military technothrillers like THE SILENT SERVICE to office dramas like HOTEL and light comedies like WHAT'S MICHAEL?) to aid the reader in his or her study of the language. Available in some comic stores and at most large Japanese bookshops, subscriptions are available via the magazine's editorial office.

FOR THE ACTION FAN

If you're searching for a present for a devoted high-octane action buff and gun bunny, Dark Horse's currently running GUNSMITH CATS 10-issue miniseries is a sure-fire hit, packed with car chases, explosions, speedy gunplay and dynamite characters. Alternatively, Dark Horse Comics' reprint volumes of the based-on-the-anime DIRTY PAIR miniseries are another slam-bang rollercoaster ride; currently, collected trade paperbacks of BIOHAZARDS, DANGEROUS ACQUAINTANCES, A PLAGUE OF ANGELS and SIM HELL are available.

FOR THE HOPELESS ROMANTIC

Don't go for more trashy Mills & Boon books this year; opt instead for Kosuke Fujishima's OH MY GODDESS!, a tale of love, wishes and odd consequences. After the success of the first two OMG! miniseries, Dark Horse are running the third instalment as a series of stand-alone one-shot and two-parters. For Xmas, why not try the LOVE POTION NUMBER NINE special?

FOR THE HORROR FAN

If it's gore, frights, or just plain chills you want, you can find it in a manga style. With the animated version due for a 1996 release from Manga Video, Antarctic Press' VAMPIRE MIYU series tells a darkly sinister fairytale of Miyu, a young girl whose bloodthirst is awakened in her quest to defeat the demonic Shinma. For the slasher flick fans, HELL BABY is a blood-soaked book packed with oozing entrails and splatter galore. And for a more discerning chiller, Dark Horse's trade paperback collection of the immortal saga 3 X 3 EYES is a good choice.



FOR THE CUTE LOVER

If you like it cuddly, fluffy and bubbly, then Antarctic's HURRICANE GIRLS is for you, seven issues of high-grade industrial-strength cuteness from Hiroshi Yakumo and the Japanese manga team at Studio Do-Do (the folks who brought you F-III BANDIT, FANTASTIC PANIC and AMAZING STRIP). Or, if you like a little zip with your giggles, Dark Horse's translation of Kosuke Fujishima's popular police girl manga YOU'RE UNDER ARREST! begins its eight-part run in December.

FOR THE SCIENCE-FICTION FAN

For the serious SF devotee, Yukinobu Hoshino's Arthur C. Clarke-inspired 2001 NIGHTS anthology is available in a bookshelf format from Viz Communications; or try Katsuhiro Otomo's pre-AKIRA masterpieces MEMORIES and DOMU (available in both Equinox and Studio Proteus translated versions).

FOR THE TECHNOPHILE

If it's hardware you want, you can have it; Masamune Shirow's multi-faceted APPLESEED saga is available in trade paperback volumes from Dark Horse, as is the must-have APPLESEED DATABOOK and the anime-inspired pseudomanga BUBBLEGUM CRISIS: GRAND MAL by Adam Warren. For BGC fans, the AD POLICE prequel manga is on sale in a collected volume from Viz Communications.

FOR THE SERIOUS LITERATI

For the reader of classic works and hefty tomes of deep meaning, Penguin's landmark translation (the first ever into English) of BAREFOOT GEN is a must-have; the powerful anti-war story is an icon of manga excellence and a triumph of emotive storytelling.

AND FOR SOME STOCKING FILLERS

Don't forget that all comic collectors need to keep their precious manga safe, so a pack or three of acid-free backing boards, mylar bags and storage boxes will always come in handy. And for something a little more colourful, don't forget the glossy trading card sets based on AKIRA and the U.S. MANGA CORPS line.

NEW HARDWARE RELEASE: PIPPIN POWER PLAYER

Sporting the rather odd name of the Pippin, Bandai and Apple Computers collaboration to release a CD ROM Player in Japan has nearly reached its zenith with details of availability starting to materialise in the Japanese computer press. Scheduled for a 95 release, the Pippin Power Player now looks set to be put back to early 96 although Bandai intend to push the machine at the end of 95 to a limited test audience. A number of machines will be available to rent (although no news of software availability or rental charges have been announced) and Bandai hope to gauge the consumer reaction before starting production proper.

Intended to be a multi-media CD ROM system, the Pippin will be able to play video and photo CDs as well as games software. Compatibility with Apple Macintosh software too means that the system will have a great deal of support at launch. The system sounds like it will be quite similar in style to NEC's PC-FX CD, a heavily anime based system currently available in Japan but non-existent in the usual grey import market. Bandai's licensing deals also mean that the Pippin Power Player will also have it's fair share of anime titles with the likes of Gundam, Patlabor and (heh heh) Dragonball all likely to appear on the system sooner rather than later.

Distribution outside of Japan is, at the moment, unlikely but with Apple's global market anything is possible. More information will follow as we get it.

TOHSHINDEN - TAKARA

Released this month in Japan was Tohshinden S for Sega's Saturn. Looking much like it's Playstation counterpart despite a few tweaks, Saturn's Tohshinden has the benefit of re-styled character designs and a rather fetching intro sequence similar to that of Namco's Tekken. This may be a case of too little too late though as Sega also saw fit to release the amazing looking Virtua Fighter 2 for their next-gen machine. Getting top marks in the Japanese press, Virtua Fighter 2 will certainly be turning a few heads upon release in the west. Playstation will need some impressive software to stand up to this onslaught so Takara's Tohshinden 2 may go some way to bridge this gap. Looking much better than the original, Tohshinden 2's graphics have much more detail and shading making for a more realistic fighting environment. Gameplay should be fairly similar to the original, but the inclusion of the overdrive gauge should add another dimension to the playability. Although not original in itself, the gauge, when full, allows the player access to more damaging special moves (similar to SNES Turtles and more recently Street Fighter Zero) and adding another level to the gameplay. Three new fighters have also joined the ranks in TSD 2 and these include Tracy, an American Police officer with a taste for unconventional uniform and a pair of Police issue batons. Tipped as an agile character, she may put Ellis into second choice as far as speed is



concerned. Chaos is a mysterious fighter armed with a scythe and looking like the Grim Reaper's younger brother. Said to have an unusual fighting style and tricky control method, Chaos will have special moves unlike any of the other players.

Finally, after taking the rap for the last tournament's outcome Gaia has decided to join the bout to redeem himself. Minus most of his armour from the first game, Gaia will be faster than before but not quite as strong to compensate for this. The other characters have also had some changes in the way of new costumes with Ellis's looking particularly impressive with a nice pink flouncy ballerina type dress. Capcom are also linked with Takara for Tohshinden 2 and are taking command of the coin-op version that is also due to appear, the Playstation version, however, should be out in Japan on the 29th of December at 5800 Yen so expect import copies to be on these shores shortly. You have been warned.

IN PRODUCTION

Gambarre Geoman (known as Mystical Ninja in the West) has been a popular platform series on the SNES for quite a few years now so it comes as a nice surprise to hear of the next installment Gambarre Geoman twinkle twinkle, the reason I became a dancer (Konami). Looking much like the previous games, this should be quite fun if the programmers have enough new ideas to keep the series afloat. Konami have also announced a

Geoman game for the Playstation with the subtitle of Space pirate Acogin. The graphics look fairly similar to the Snes games but with added colour and detail. The Playstation's capabilities could mean that this will be one hell of a cool platform game but we'll have to hope that Konami see fit to release it outside of Japan (unlike the last two snes games). New Warrior Gundam W and Dragonball Z Hyper Dimension are two new Snes fighters from Bandai. The last Gundam beat-em-up from Bandai was quite reasonable as fighters go so this may be worth a look, while Dragonball looks quite different than its previous outings with a graphical style more in line with the manga. More information on these two when we get it. Looking quite pretty on the Playstation is the RPG Midland Kingdom of Illusion which is a full polygon game with very cute graphics. Unfortunately, the manufacturers name is unknown at this point but the game does look very nice indeed. It would be nice to say that the game will be released outside of Japan but it's more likely that it will only be available on import which is a shame. Lastly, the Great Battle team are at it again with the announcement of Great Battle 5. Banpresto's latest offering has a wild west theme to it and, as the last Snes game was actually quite good, should be pretty good. Hopefully a full review will follow.

Well that's all once again, hope you all had a good christmas, mata ne. Thanks to Tomoko, Jim and the Nickel for their help over the last year and thanks to Alex for the DB sessions.



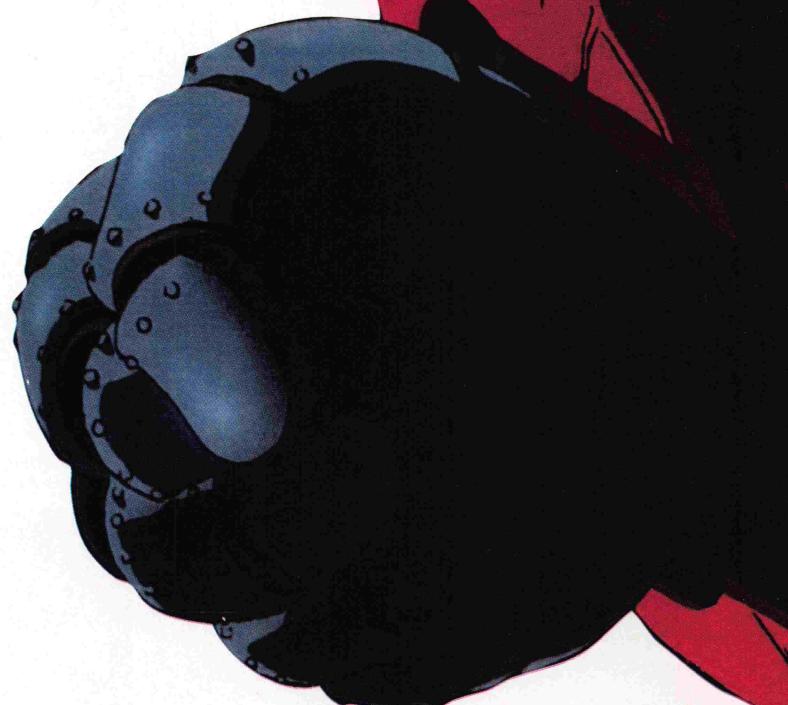
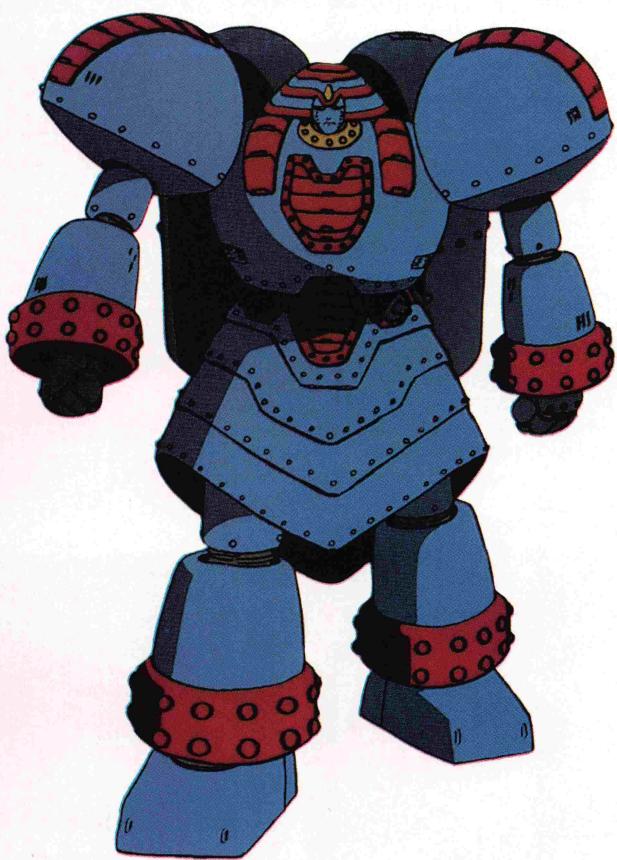
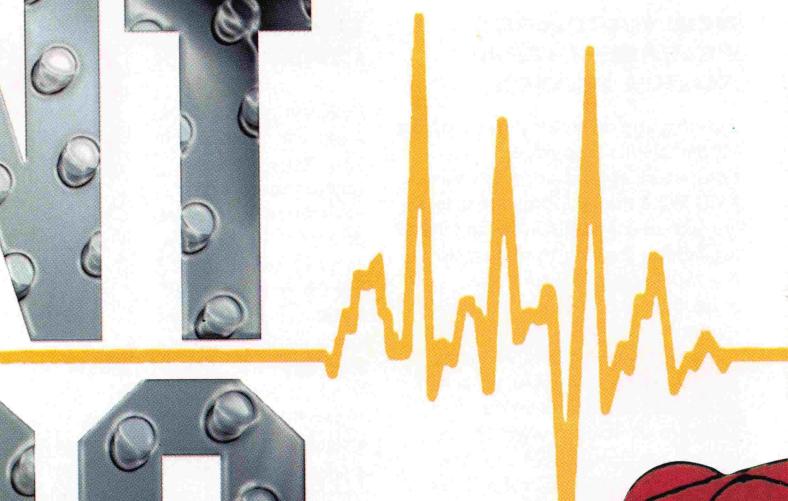
BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 2 Back row Left to right: Rangu, Chaos, Deek, Kain, Eiji, Mondo, Gaia. Front row Left to right: Ho Fuai, Ellis, Sofia, and Tracy



Above: Gambarre Geoman- Space Pirate Acogin Below: Midland Kingdom of Illusion- both on the Playstation

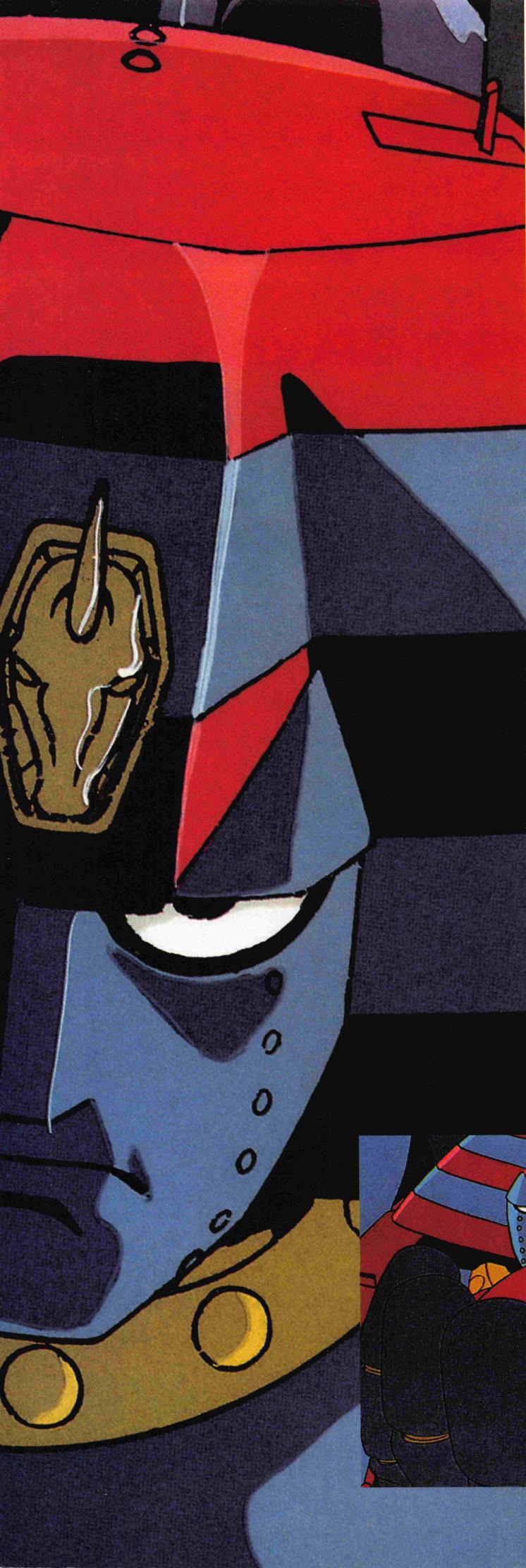


GIANT ROBO



ギヤントロボ





GIANT ROBO

ORIGINS

Mitsuteru Yokoyama was the creator of GIANT ROBO, and of two other successful manga which made the leap to the silver screen - the seminal TETSUJIN 28-GO (screened in the USA as GIGANTOR) and BABEL II, currently out in the USA on video from Orion/Streamline and in the UK from East2West. Starting in February, Manga Video are bringing out the 1992 OAV series which is credited with a large part of the success of the 90s 'retro' trend in chara and mecha design. A blend of action, adventure and humour, the series has enjoyed huge critical acclaim and was a fan favourite long before its US debut on the U.S. Renditions label, dubbed into English by L.A. Hero.

One of the series' many in-jokes is the number of other Yokoyama characters who make guest appearances. Most of the major characters first appeared in his manga adaptation of the classic novel *The Water Margin* about a group of generals who gather at Liang Shan Bo, (Ryozanpaku, the headquarters of GIANT ROBO's International Police Organisation), to fight the corrupt government of 12th century China. However director Yasuhiro Imagawa has brought other influences of his own to the OAV series; for example, the character known in the manga as Dr. Franken becomes Dr. Franken Von Vogler, a reference to the 19th-century magician/hypnotist in Ingmar Bergman's film *The*

Magician combined with a nod to Dr. Frank-N-Furter, central figure of Imagawa's 'lifelong inspiration', *The Rocky Horror Show*.

SPINOFFS

The GIANT ROBO manga originally appeared in *Shonen Sunday* magazine in the 50s. In 1967 a live action TV series loosely based on the manga was produced by Toei Doga. The OAV series also generated a manga version in eight volumes, published by Kadokawa Shoten. OAV director Yasuhiro Imagawa wrote the script, the artwork was by Mari Mizuta, and each 198 page volume cost Y950. Just as the original manga and its live-action TV spinoff diverged in story and character details, so the OAV and new manga are similar, but not identical, and have different conclusions. Another successful spinoff from GIANT ROBO has been the GINREI OAV series, starring the beautiful agent in a series of self-contained stories.

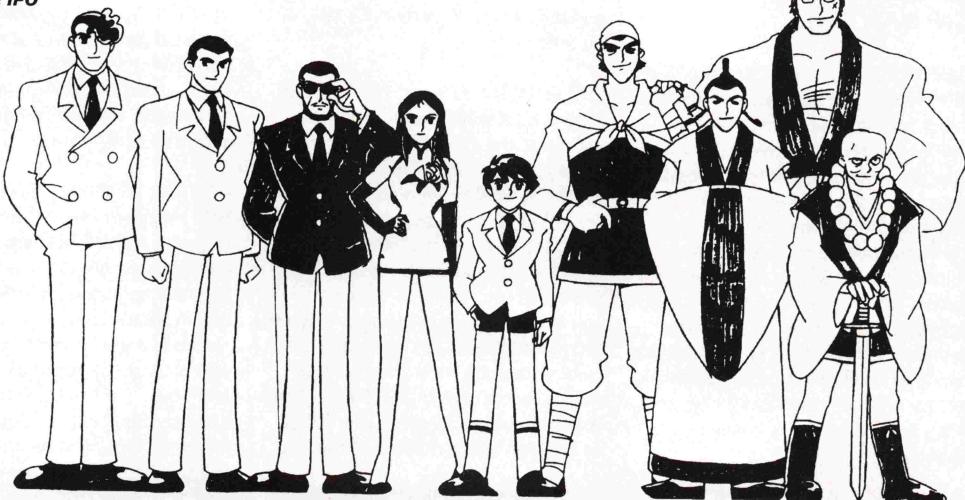
THE STAFF

Director
Yasuhiro Imagawa
Script
Yasuhiro Imagawa and Eiichi Matsuyama
Original story
Mitsuteru Yokoyama
Chara design
Toshiyuki Kuboka and Akihiko Yamashita
Mecha design
Takashi Watanabe
Image Concept Design
Makoto Kobayashi
Anime director
Kazuyoshi Katayama
Art director
Hiromasa Oguro
SFX director
Hideaki Anno
Music
Masamichi Amano





THE IPO



Left to right: Kenji Murasame, Rinchu, Nakajo, Ginrei, Daisaku, Taiso, Go-Gakujin, Tetsugyu, Isseidojin

THE TEAMS

IPO/EXPERTS OF JUSTICE

The International Police Organisation is a group dedicated to the preservation of peace and defeating the schemes of the evil Big Fire. Every country in the world has its own branch of the IPO. As agents it employs special individuals called Experts (known as Experts of Justice because they work for the IPO) who possess special abilities or excel far beyond ordinary people in martial arts, mechanical operations, intelligence or even extrasensory or paranormal powers. The IPO is rumoured to have a mountain-top HQ at Ryozanpaku in the West of Shantung Province, China. The Beijing branch has its headquarters in an abandoned nuclear power plant on the outskirts of the city, with the underground atomic reactor now used as a secure shelter and Giant Robo itself stored in a huge silo, surrounded by heavy partition walls and strict security.

BIG FIRE

A worldwide secret society bent on global domination, this evil group is not widely known and its origins and structure are shrouded in mystery, while no-one knows who its leader is. The Top Ten Elite, or *Jukketsu-shu*, headed by Shokatsu Komei, lead the organisation, and agents are graded A, B or C class depending on their skills and importance. Even among the C-class agents there are many Experts with special abilities. Big Fire seized the opportunity of the new Shizuma Drive technology to create many weapons; the organisation also commissioned the building of Giant Robo by Dr. Kusama, and later killed him and his wife when he learned of their true intentions. (However, before he died the Doctor ensured that the robot would obey only one voice - that of his young son, Daisaku.) BF's headquarters is also on a mountain-top, in a heavily fortified castle.

THE GOOD GUYS

DAISAKU KUSAMA - Giant Robo's 12-year-old controller is an orphan, his parents killed by Big Fire when they tried to escape its evil grasp. He is a constant target for the organisation and therefore lives under the protection of the IPO. He has problems relating to people but is a brave and determined boy. His voice artist is Kappi Yamaguchi, better known as the voice of Ranma-kun.

GINREI - this beautiful young woman is an Expert with the IPO's Beijing branch, her speciality being the very rare ability to teleport. However, this is not without its risks, since using her power drains her strength and could even kill her. Ginrei is also an expert at hand-to-hand combat. She treats Daisaku like a little brother but she herself has a tragic family background. Daughter of the mad Professor Von Vogler and sister of Big Fire agent Genya, she carries a weight of guilt and the Bashutarle tragedy is a traumatic memory for her. We first see her, not in her famous Chinese dress, but disguised as a man! She's 18 years old and voiced by Sumi Shimamoto, best known as the voice of Nausicaa.

CHIEF NAKAO - the head of IPO Beijing, the Chief is 45 and nicknamed 'The Silent'; nothing is known of his origins or his past life before joining the IPO, or his special abilities. Despite this and his cool, detached, sometimes hard exterior, his team trust him completely. His one weakness seems to be the pipe he always carries and his only known friend is Scholar Go. Iemasa Kayumi, who recently scored a huge success as the Puppet Master in *GHOST IN THE SHELL*, provides his voice.

TAISO is the leader of the Experts of Justice, and at 27 years old is already renowned throughout the IPO. He's a master of Chinese martial arts and can run at supersonic speeds. A friendly, cheerful yet very responsible young man (although he seems over-fond of his sake), his team-mates regard him as a sort of 'big brother'. especially Daisaku and Tetsugyu. Tadasuke Wakamoto provides his voice.

GO-GAKUJIN (aka Scholar Go) is 28, Beijing branch's chief scientist and an Expert in intelligence, though he's also a mean fighter with his fans, using the 'tessensu' [iron fan] technique. His calm, demure manner

recalls the Imperial courtiers of old China, and he's the only person who is a friend to Nakao. A tranquil, logical man, he analyzes everything on rational principles and is a firm believer in science and the Shizuma Drive as forces for good. His voice actor is Masahito Ebara.

KENJI MURASAME is a 27-year-old Expert from IPO's Paris branch. He has very unusual special powers and is a lone wolf. He's also the only person to see the first apparition of Von Vogler in Paris, at Notre Dame. His elder brother Kazuma was killed during the operation to capture Giant Robo from Big Fire and this may explain his tendency to brood. He's a snappy, even foppish dresser with a liking for the colour pink.

TETSUGYU is another user of Chinese martial arts - his special attack is the 'kiko senpu', or *spiritual force hurricane*, and he also possesses iron strength and superhuman powers. He can bring down helicopters with his twin axes. Inside his big frame is a gentle, good-hearted but very scatterbrained personality, almost childlike in its excitability, despite his sometimes oafish manner. He has trained with Taiso, who is two years older than him, since they were children, and loves him as a brother. He also has a massive crush on Ginrei. His seiyuu is Akikazu Iizuka.

ISSEI DOJIN (The Taoist) dresses like a Buddhist monk and is an expert in magic, using many ancient spells, runes, and Buddhist incantations. he can change shape and is a master of illusion.

YOSHI (aka The Blue Faced Beast) is an Expert from Headquarters, temporarily assigned to Beijing base. She's a gifted martial artist and her chosen weapon is the quarterstaff. Her aggression and drive are coupled with great courage.

RINCHU is a young IPO agent at the Beijing branch.



Left to right: Ivan, Alberto, Genya, Ko-Enshaku

THE BAD GUYS

ALBERTO is 38, one of the Top Ten Elite, whose special power is the ability to manipulate shockwaves, giving him the nickname Shockwave Alberto. He can run at high speeds and cause earthquakes. He has absolute confidence - some would say arrogance - and is therefore quite fearless. He has a grudge against Taiso, who cost him both his right eye (now replaced by a laser monocle) and his best friend and fellow-Elite member Illusion Cervantes, former head of the Giant Robo project. His voice artist is Yosuke Akimoto.

KO-ENSHAKU is a man of mystery, never seen without his mask, cape and armour. No-one has ever heard his voice. On a mission he obeys only the leader, and all the other agents suspect him of being a spy for the Big Fire leadership. Naturally, he is therefore hated! On Operation Still Earth he is assigned as Genya's bodyguard. He can move at supersonic speed and pass through solid matter, and he fights with whips.

IVAN (pronounced eewan) is 32, a B-class agent and a loyal and experienced man who pilots the robot Uranus. His power is rapid movement, which he can also convert into kinetic energy for use as a weapon. He can be impulsive and is a bit of a show-off. As Alberto's crony/chauffeur he sees the selection of the younger Genya to be mission leader in episode 1 as an insult to him and his friend. As a native of the now-destroyed country of Bashutarle, Ivan might have a hidden agenda of his own... His voice is provided by Yasuyoshi Hara.

GENYA is just 28, but already an A-class agent, and is selected to be leader of the first episode's mission, Operation Still Earth. As operation leader he commands even the Ten. Son of Von Vogler, Genya too is haunted by the Bashutarle tragedy, although he stands opposed to his sister Ginrei. He intends to wreak a terrible revenge for his father by recreating the Bashutarle tragedy on

a global scale. Sanemori Ogawa is his voice artist.

THE OTHER SEVEN of the Top Ten Elite are telekineticist Kawarasaki, oldest of the Ten and pilot of the giant robot Dharma; Red Mask, an expert in ninjutsu who carries a giant transport kite concealed in his briefcase; Noon Zangetsu, who also wears a mask and whose abilities are unknown; Twilight Yuki, who can command birds and beasts; Amazing Fitzkaraldo, who can spontaneously create vacuum; Kido the Blunt, a martial arts Expert; and Genius Devil Jujoji, the most intellectually gifted of the Ten and a master of the Tao.

THE SHIZUMA DRIVE AND THE TRAGEDY OF BASHUTARLE

Ten years before our story starts, the Third Energy Revolution occurred. The Shizuma Drive has been man's dream for centuries - a pollution-free, completely recyclable, apparently inexhaustible energy source which has left harmful nuclear power and combustible fuels in the past. The Drive now has a 99% share of the world's energy market. The recently established Saint A.B.E. Power Station, the world's large Shizuma power station, now produces 50% of Earth's electricity. Shizuma Drives are very adaptable and come in many shapes and sizes for all kinds of purposes and projects. Unfortunately the Drive was bought at a terrible price. A premature test of an earlier version led to the tragedy of Bashutarle, which destroyed an entire country; and the evil secret organisation Big Fire has made use of the new technology to build a secret army with robotic weapons of staggering power.

THE SCIENTISTS

PROFESSOR SHIZUMA completed the Shizuma Drive ten years before the story opens, and has claimed all the credit. He won the Nobel Prize for his work, but the Bashutarle incident has made him neurotic and guilt-ridden - though even before this he was a timid, weak man. He

feels that by pushing his colleagues too hard he helped create the conditions for the tragedy. He is very much afraid of Von Vogler and believes he will return. His voice artist is Kazuo Harada.

DOCTOR FRANKEN VON VOGLER is held responsible for the Bashutarle tragedy. A good-hearted scientist who wanted only to tackle the energy crisis and stop pollution, he was driven insane by the pressure of research and the ferocious pace which Shizuma imposed on the project team. He has been blamed for causing the great accident which killed millions, and as a result his role in helping to create mankind's new prosperity has never been recognised. It was presumed he died in the tragedy, but ten years later he reappears and threatens the world once more. Koichi Chiba provides his voice.

DR. DUNCAN, PROF. SHIMURE and MR. TRUMBEAU are members of the Shizuma development team who go missing one after another and are later found hanged from the belfry of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

MECHA

GIANT ROBO is a land-battle robot built by a team working for Big Fire, headed by engineer Professor Kusama. It's 30 metres tall and weighs 1,500 tonnes, and its power source (which is shrouded in mystery until the series is well under way) generates 1.08 million horsepower. Its weaponry is impressive, with four Sponson cannon in its waist, wire anchors in its chest, and missiles and torpedoes located inside shutters all over its body. It can also fly, with a maximum speed of 565 kilometres per hour; its fists retract into its forearms during flight. It is controlled via a voice command system and only Daisaku can operate it. Giant Robo is now under the protection of the IPO, who will sacrifice anything to keep it - and Daisaku - safe. This makes it a weakness for them, as well as a very powerful weapon in the fight against Big Fire.

THE GRETA GARBO is the IPO's airship and mobile headquarters. When Giant Robo is aboard it is housed in a huge spherical section of the ship's gondola. GG has impressive teeth - three 37mm cannons in both bow and stern, and three 20mm machine guns and two 12.7 mm machine guns in the gondola.

IMPERIAL RESTORATION DRAGON AKATSUKI (Daybreak) is Big Fire's giant robot train. It has multiple Shizuma drives delivering plenty of power, and carries a fleet of all-purpose helicopters in its tail section, with a cockpit located in its back. The S-Mode lever shifts it to 'Special Mode', transforming it into a fearsome battle mecha. However Giant Robo proves too much for it.

GADGETS

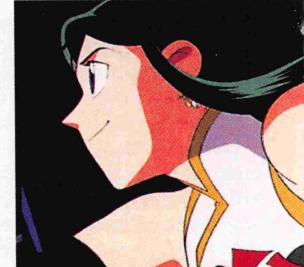
DAISAKU'S WRISTWATCH is a very unusual one - it contains the microphone for Giant Robo's voice-operation system. Obviously, it never leaves his wrist!

GINREI'S RING is also a communication device - its red stone starts blinking when a voice transmission is incoming. Shades of Lady Penelope's teapot in THUNDERBIRDS!

TAISO'S SAKE FLASK is a hollowed-out gourd which never leaves his side. It doesn't just hold his favourite drink, though - there's a radio transmitter in the cap. (What was that about THUNDERBIRDS?...)

GINREI'S GUN is a big handgun which fires bullets that hit with the force of a missile, but nevertheless has almost no recoil, enabling her to fire with extraordinary accuracy.

THE BLACK ATTACHE CASE is one of three, each containing a Shizuma drive variation sample; if all three are brought together the tragedy of Bashutarle may repeat itself.



FIVE GOOD REASONS TO WATCH GIANT ROBO

1. The fluid animation and wonderful colour palette
2. The genius of Hideaki Anno as technical director
3. Makoto Kobayashi's fabulous mecha that give a whole new meaning to the term "heavy metal"
4. Imagawa's literate and witty direction.
5. The engaging characters and their relationships



The author wishes to acknowledge the information and inspiration provided by the following sources : NEWTYPE, ANIME V, ANIMAGE (Japan) PROTO-CULTURE ADDICTS (Canada), TSUNAMI (France), MANGAZINE, V-MAX, ANIMERICA (USA).

うるせいやつら



Have you ever wondered where the money you spend on Anime FX goes? Some of it goes on the writers, rent, phone bills, printing costs and what-have-you. But a pretty large proportion goes on road-testing various products for review, because you see, "we care." The financial life of a hard-core anime fan can be pretty depressing; so many products don't come cheap, and one of the purposes of the review sections is to help you avoid some pretty dire spending mistakes. The Urusei Yatsura Complete Music Box, is one such mistake.

At £159.99 for fifteen CDs, you'd be forgiven for thinking that a suitably-flush Lum fan would be onto a winner, but be warned! Firstly, the

Complete Music Box isn't actually 'complete', not by my definition anyway. It's true that it contains every single scrap of music ever heard in the UY TV episodes and movies, but it omits several spin-offs. Thus you'll find the original soundtrack to films like *Always My Darling*, but not the great dance remixes and karaoke versions on the *Lum for the World* novelty album.

Another problem is that while anyone who buys the Complete Music Box will effectively be snapping up the original soundtracks (OSTs) to all six movies for less than £11 each, they'll also be buying a lot of dross. Kitty Records' definition of 'complete' means, quite literally, everything in the series that could vaguely be described as music, from drum rolls to pratfall musical stings. CD #4, for example, contains over 46 (!) tracks, only a few of which could accurately be described as 'tunes'. I've heard that many Japanese stores thought they knew a bargain when they saw one, and bought several sets of the Music Box to break up and sell in separate units for higher profit. However, while eager fans snapped certain items, a large proportion of the CDs stayed on the shelves. Just in case an unsuspecting shop near you tries the same tactic, these are the ones

you'll probably prefer to get your hands on:

- CD #6 *Only You* OST
- CD #7 *Beautiful Dreamer* OST
- CD #8 *Remember My Love* OST
- CD #9 *Lum the Forever* OST
- CD #10 *Final* OST
- CD #11 *Always My Darling* OST

CDs #1-5 consist of music from the TV series, divided up by composer rather than order of appearance. #12 consists of 'Other Songs', #13 is, (in my opinion) the rather naff '*Lum Symphonic*' and the final two are 'bonus discs' with a few (but, I remind you, not all) songs that haven't previously been put on CD.

But it's not all that bad, and if you still think it sounds like a good deal, then you're obviously Kitty's perfect customer. Anyone who does shell out for the Complete Music Box will get something extremely useful, and that is a fully-comprehensive, large-format, 60-page booklet on the Urusei Yatsura music. This alone is worth the price of several CDs, since it includes interviews with all seven composers who worked on the series, and lyric sheets for every song covered. There's also a *genuinely* complete LD, video- and discography, which has the gumption to include those CDs like *Lum*

Now That's



for the World that aren't in the Music Box! Most astounding of all is a comprehensive cue sheet for the 195 TV episodes, giving the serial number and location of every single track in the Music Box.

So you do get something for your money, but who is really going to need it? If you're writing a PhD on the music of Urusei Yatsura, it's a bargain. If you're an AnimEigo soundmixer who's just accidentally wiped the music track while dubbing episode 127, then the Music Box could save your life! But apart from that, I don't think Kitty Records will find too many buyers for their collection. Buy the ones you want separately, or don't buy them at all.

On a happier note, there's a much better buy in the shops that's within everyone's price-range, and that's the **J-Groove: The Soul of Japan** compilation CD from the More Music label. While the UY Complete Music Box contains some great music but isn't necessarily worth the money, **J-Groove** has some awful pap on its playlist, but is still a bargain at £6.99 for a whopping 79 minutes of Japanese dance tunes.

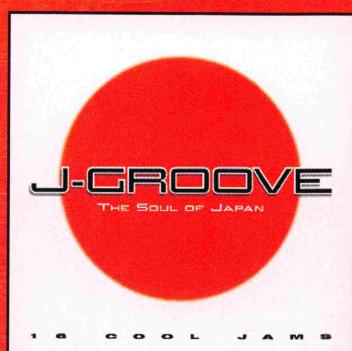
J-Groove's whole reason for existence is a bit suspicious. The sleeve-

note's talk of 'about-to-happen' artists makes me wonder if this isn't a clever marketing ploy. Stick eight oriental artists on a compilation CD, put it out in the UK market so cheaply that a lot of people will pick it up as an impulse purchase, and when it inevitably charts you can go back to the Japanese audience and tell them that so-and-so got to number 36 in the exotic, hallowed UK record charts. But even if that is the true reason for **J-Groove**'s release over here, it's a victimless crime. The artists get extra exposure, More Music make a packet on their sales, and you and I get the chance to buy a Japanese CD for little more than the cost of a *Guyver* video. What's more, since most of these artists are contracted to Pioneer LDC, a successful reception for **J-Groove** might substantially increase the chances of us getting our hands on a few Pioneer anime CDs, and wouldn't that be nice. It may be a Japanese marketing ploy, but it's a rather nice way of being exploited, don't you think?

The quality of music on **J-Groove** is rather uneven. Eternal meets Stock, Aitken and Waterman is probably the best way to describe it, so it's not everyone's cup of tea. Actually, it's not even my cup of tea, but just like Kylie and her ilk, these tunes

have a habit of taking over your skull. Katsumi's *Dreaming* is a poppy little track, which begins just like Mariya Takeuchi's *Genki o dashite* (from Kodansha's rival **Sing Japanese** compilation, see AUK#4) before turning into a passable impression of Rick Astley (remember him?). His other track, *Everytime You Walk*, sounds almost exactly like the first, so there's a definite candidate for Astleydom there. The same applies for the offerings from Toshinori Yonekura, with foot-tappingly annoying tracks that could easily get them all grooving at two in the morning at any Essex disco without anyone even noticing the lyrics are in Japanese. And Tomiko Kobayashi's *Can't Stop My Love* grew on me after a while with its catchy Boney-M (well, sort of...) chorus.

But I've saved the best till last. Even if I hated all the artists on **J-Groove**, my money would have been well spent, because it would be a £6.99 insurance policy against over £100 down the drain if I'd bought all their albums separately. But **J-Groove** never claimed to be anything more than a sampler, and in my case they've sold several Michiru Kojima albums in this country on the strength of just one track. Kojima's *Crime of Love* is a great funky dance



tune, she has a beautiful voice, the lyrics are fabulous and I've been converted. I could happily soak up a regular **J-Groove** release if they were all this useful in helping me choose how to spend my money. How about one a year? Now that's what I call music!

Urusei Yatsura Complete Music Box (KTCR 9018/30 + 2CDs)

J-Groove: The Soul of Japan (MOCD 3017) (RECOMMENDED)



What I Call Music



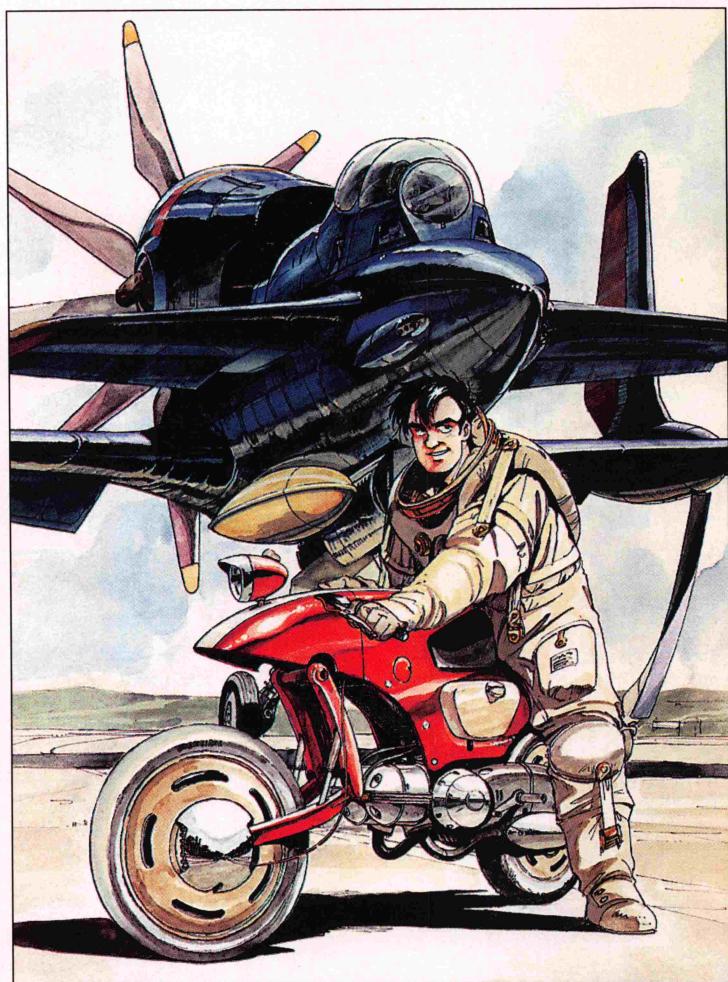
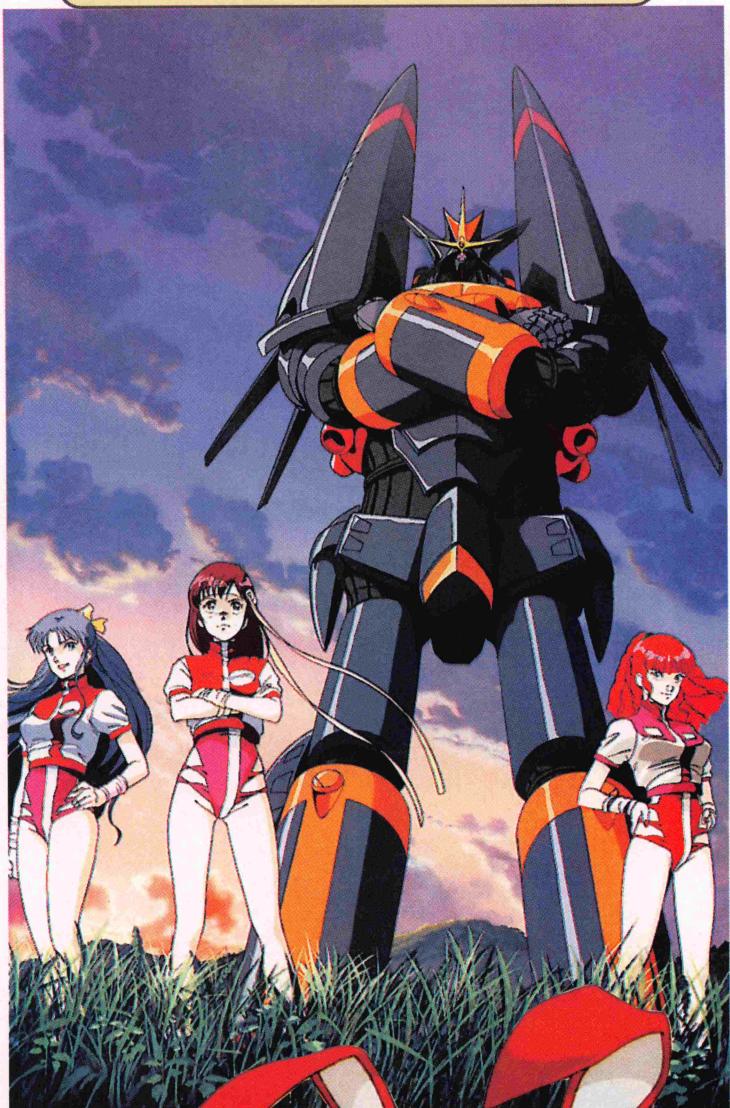
JONATHAN CLEMENTS

JAPAN ROCKS

GAINAX PAST

OTAKU NO VIDEO (CUT OUT BELOW)

AIM FOR THE TOP! GUNBUSTER



ROYAL SPACE FORCE; WINGS OF HONNEAMISE

NADIA OF THE MYSTERIOUS SEAS



find, FIND your PLACE speak, SPEAK THE TRUTH



Nirvana, "Radio Friendly Unit Shifter"

- is where the words of the title come from; Kurt Cobain said them, among one of his final songs. In a *Rolling Stone* article entitled "A Year on the Road with Nirvana", author Michael Azzerad tells this story: backstage at the band's April 1993 San Francisco benefit show for Bosnian rape victims, Cobain put his daughter Frances on Azzerad's lap and "we chatted about *Speed Racer*, one of his favorite TV shows. He sang me the theme song as several self-appointed minders eyed us."

A member of Gainax who owns only one Nirvana song, "Come as You Are", said recently that he felt no hesitation in saying that their studio epitomises Generation X in Japan. Probably Gainax's knowledge of Kurt Cobain is as limited as his was of anime; yet each knew just a little of each other's worlds. The note Cobain left said a sense of self-honesty was compelling him to pull the trigger; when Gainax released their last anime, 1991's *OTAKU NO VIDEO*, there were many in the anime industry who saw it as nothing less than honesty taken to the point of suicide.

Smashing Pumpkins, "Rocket"

The Royal Space Force, ridiculed by society; the anime industry, ridiculed by society. The launching of the rocket, a new era for mankind; the launching of Gainax's first release in 1987, THE WINGS OF HONNEAMISE - a new era for Japanese animation. "HONNEAMISE is a mirror!", agreed former Gainax president and co-founder Toshio Okada, speaking at last September's Otakon in the U.S. Hideaki Anno, Gainax's top animator, and therefore one of the very best in Japan, once said that the film stands for

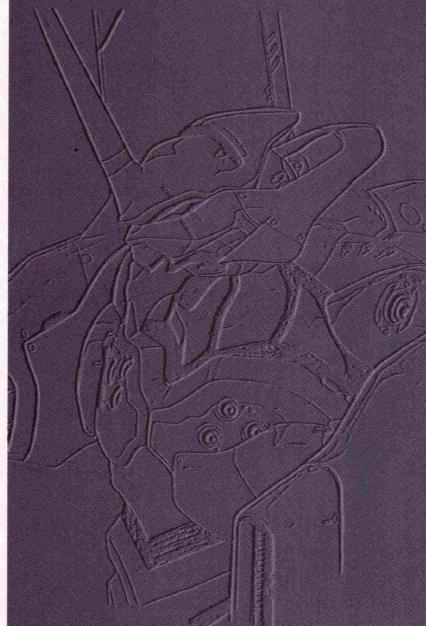


GAINAX PRESENT: NEON GENESIS EVANGELION

the frustration of a generation. No less did Hiroyuki Yamaga, HONNEAMISE's writer and director, intend for it to stand specifically for the frustrations of his tribe of otaku and the hopes that through its success they would fulfil a glorious destiny.

Yamaga is from the other side of

Japan, where the action isn't, the town of Niigata. If you look at HONNEAMISE's pre-title sequence, with the young Shiro running down to the shores of the great inland sea that is the western border of the Kingdom of Honneamano, you are basically seeing what the Sea of Japan would look like from the Niigata coast. In the geographical



GAINAX,
the iconoclastic
creators of **ROYAL
SPACE FORCE : WINGS
OF HONNEAMISE**
(1987), **AIM FOR THE
TOP! GUNBUSTER**
(1988), **NADIA OF THE
MYSTERIOUS SEAS**
(1990) and **OTAKU NO
VIDEO** (1991), return
to anime after four
years of exile. One
take on the birth,
death and resurrection
of the famed studio.
Article by
CARL GUSTAV HORN

sense, Yamaga's "west coast perspective" tends to affect the arrangement of the nations in the film, with the demilitarised zone where the Korean War-era air combat of the film's climax occurs to the south-west, just as Korea with its demilitarised zone proceeds from the line of Japan's south-west curve. A similar principle would apply when designing Naghatsumih City, the headquarters of the Royal Space Force. It symbolized the city where Gainax came together, Osaka - an industrial town distinctly *not* the centre of power, but a place where the future was being made. The outlandish mechanical signs of Naghatsumih's pleasure quarter were even based on such Osaka sights as a giant mobile crab billboard outside a seafood restaurant (while the female-form columns of one of the film's 'establishments' was the original design of a long-time Gainax crony named Ken'ichi Sonoda).

Gainax declared itself in existence so that the film could be made, but it was the making of the film, in Yamaga's view, that transformed him and his friends from being a bunch of college kids to being Gainax. Yamaga, ever the otaku, sat down and made a list of all the things he thought you were supposed to have in an anime: "hero, babe, mecha, fight scenes". Then came the trick, for the man who would later be given the job of writing the first of the MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM OAVs, WAR IN THE POCKET ("they gave me a 'bible' this thick of things I couldn't change", recalls Yamaga): re-inventing them.

For example, between HONNEAMISE's 'hero' Shiro and 'babe' Leiqinni came Yamaga's dissatisfaction with always seeing the man and the woman come together at the end of a story. Rather, he wanted to tell a real-life situation, and show that sometimes people may have only one point in their lives, one specific instance where two might understand each other, as in Shiro and Leiqinni's conversation at her house, the conversation from which the entire rest of the film proceeds. Two people may try to build an entire relationship on such a moment, as Leiqinni saw Shiro as the "wonderful person" who would fill her vision of peace for "our children" among the stars;

and Shiro saw Leiqinni's rapt admiration and investiture of him as betokening intimacy between them. The mutual blindness built to its 'extreme representation', Shiro's attempted rape of Leiqinni (a scene edited out of the Manga U.K. dubbed release), with its aftermath, Shiro and Leiqinni's last real conversation, an ironic counterpoint to their first and an additional emphasis of just how much they were failing to communicate with one another.

As an interesting side note, while Ryuichi Sakamoto's soundtrack for HONNEAMISE has always garnered praise (although, curiously, a recent NHK retrospective on his career failed to mention it at all), to Yamaga, it wasn't as if he felt there was much of a choice then (or even now) in people competent to compose a truly sophisticated movie soundtrack in Japan. At that time, Sakamoto had just gotten into this field with his work on *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*, and what he was doing with his polycultural sources and unmatched command of sampling and electronic music was precisely what Yamaga was looking for; a more original approach, for example, than Jo Hisaishi's trademark orchestral work for Hayao Miyazaki's films. For Yamaga, as it would be two years later with Katsuhiro Otomo and

Shoji Yamashiro, it was Sakamoto or nobody; he even made a 'rough' version of the film's penultimate 'march of history' sequence in order to show the composer exactly what he wanted. (This 'rough' sequence is included as part of the extra material in the LD box set THE ROYAL SPACE FORCE.)

People ask whether Yamaga's, and Gainax's, long-desired 'successor' film to HONNEAMISE, BLUE URU (after the name of its protagonist, Uru) will be set in the same world as the first. Yamaga has a different kind of answer to that: yes and no. He does not yet entirely know the story (Gainax character designer [HONNEAMISE, NADIA, EVANGELION] and manga creator [ROUTE 20, EVANGELION] Yoshiyuki Sadamoto says in his 1993 artbook *Alpha* that URU will continue the story of the Royal Space Force fifty years after the events of HONNEAMISE, where technology has progressed to include VTOL [surface-to-orbit?] craft; Toshio Okada suggested at Otakon 95 that URU might also take some inspiration from *Streets of Fire* [!]), but to Yamaga the 'world' it might take place in is as much an allegorical as a literal one; HONNEAMISE was, to him, "a representation of what the world looked like to a 22-year-old Japanese male". URU will be that same Japanese male's viewpoint at

the age he is when the film is made.

Yamaga isn't afraid of that future. At a recent Gainax celebration, he engaged in a bit of mockery of it on several levels at once when he showed off his self-created "Itako Itaro" computer system for generating plots for anime movies, demonstrating its workings while wearing the sea-blue servitor's garb of an Aum Shinri Kyo cult member. While Yamaga is in perfect agreement that Japan is liable to find itself continuing to experience quite a few social and cultural shakeups, to him that means not the disastrous shifting out of balance of an AKIRA or PAT-LABOR 2, but rather the welcome fading of what he regards as Japan's longtime stagnation, complacency, and lack of real opportunity - to a very exciting time of opportunity.

Yamaga now finds himself Gainax's Managing Director for Multimedia; a strange title, perhaps, for the artist who wrote and directed what is often regarded as anime's finest film. Not strange at all to Yamaga; rather, it is part of the requirements of his company's evolution. The incredible animation Gainax created between 1985 and 1991 was financed with other people's money, the flip side of that largesse being that Japan's most iconoclastic anime studio was in a constant struggle



to control what it had created; and, in the end, they could not own their creations. By contrast, no-one owns Gainax's software but Gainax; it is produced entirely in-house, and with their own resources. The creativity of the studio is just as recognized in their games as their anime; 1990's *Silent Moebius* won MITI's Japan Software Award, while the first of their best-selling *Princess Maker* series won the Japan Computer Game Award in 1992. Yamaga's current business is to continue to build up Gainax's multi-media presence through CD-ROM and CG technology; in 1994 the studio purchased an Indy workstation from Silicon Graphics, on whose computers the special effects in *Jurassic Park* were created. In fact, Yamaga sees a CD-ROM version of *BLUE URU* first, using the profits to help create the anime film.

And Gainax, of course, were never strangers to the application of computers to their film works; while a recent article in *Cinescape* described the CG techniques used to achieve the effect of flakes of frost falling off the rocket at take-off in *Apollo 13*, the magazine seemed unaware that the technique was in fact pioneered eight years before - by Gainax, for *THE WINGS OF HON-NEAMISE*. At the time of *OTAKU NO VIDEO*, the studio felt no hesitation in shamelessly plugging its strip-trivia game 'Cybernetic High School' within their very OAV, having it played by a shaking, stuttering otaku who constantly asks to be excused. At the time of *OTAKU NO VIDEO*, Hideaki Anno held the 1991 *Animage* Grand Prix Award, Gainax's first, in his hands for the TV series he directed, *NADIA OF THE MYSTERIOUS SEAS*, the show that had given them popular success at last. At the time of *OTAKU NO VIDEO* -

Soundgarden, "Head Down"

As is almost a matter of legend now, *THE WINGS OF HON-NEAMISE*, though it won every major anime critics' award, was spectacularly unsuccessful at the box office. Gainax might have smelled something wrong with the very name their film's distributors, the giant Toho/Towa, insisted on giving it; while the studio never understood what was wrong with their familiar name for the project, *THE ROYAL SPACE FORCE*, Toho/Towa wanted something that

sounded like the last big anime hit, *NAUSICAA OF THE VALLEY OF WIND*. Not only did they drastically re-write the film's publicity to make it sound more like *NAUSICAA*, they actually insisted that the film be released under the name "(something) of (Something)" so that even the title would sound more like *NAUSICAA*. According to Okada, Yamaga eventually decided, after many suggestions, that *THE WINGS OF HONNEAMISE*, based on the name of the film's kingdom, Honneamano, was as good a moniker as any; he then got drunk and proceeded to make up a story explaining the name, an explanation that naturally never made it into the film because Gainax didn't consider it part of the film in the first place.

But you can read about it, ironically enough, on the back of the booklet accompanying the 1991 *ROYAL SPACE FORCE* LD box set that finally bore the film's true name and its missing minute of original footage; the story is something about a bird who one day decided to try and fly to heaven and, as punishment for this temerity, ended up becoming a common staple fish, rising from the waters only to be eaten. 1991 was the year Gainax's first anime work was at last released in its intended form. It was also the year their last anime work, *OTAKU NO VIDEO*, was released, which almost marked the end of GAINAX as an animation studio. Shortly thereafter, Toshio Okada, who had guided Gainax through its every production since it was Daicon Film in 1981, departed; he had, he said, accomplished all he wanted to do.

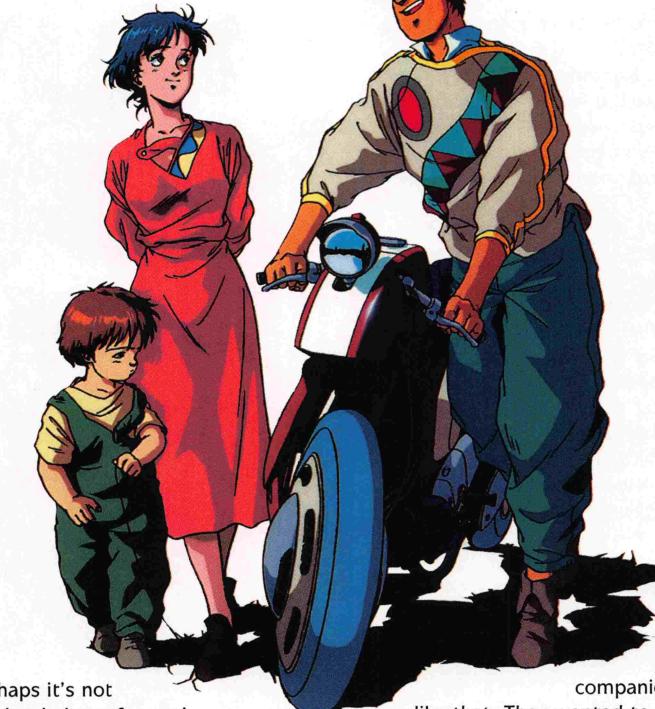
An experienced insider in the anime industry recently explained Gainax's pariah status and how that was reinforced by the ill-fated release of *OTAKU NO VIDEO*. While it has often been observed that Gainax is a studio made up of fans, what isn't necessarily realized is how unique is that status within the industry. Most animation companies in Japan attempt to "work the fan out" of their new hires; it is felt that those who consider themselves fans are of limited value because they will not endure the difficult times and cannot see the big picture, only putting effort into things that personally interest them. If the prospective animator comes off as being too 'fannish', they will likely not be hired.



Japanese animation companies have nothing against fans *per se*; they like fans - but not as employees. Some of this has to do with problems in the past with 'professional' fans who stole cel drawings and background paintings before they had even gone to camera so that they had to be done again and air-dates were missed. (Missing air-dates is cardinal among sins in the industry.) One is, of course, immediately reminded of the entire segment of *OTAKU NO VIDEO* given over to the cel thief - who, though, maintains that the one thing he would *never* do is steal unfilmed cels as "I don't want my favorite anime to be delayed".

There's much more to it, though. Japanese animators like to see themselves as artists and creators. Their salaries are often abominable for the city of Tokyo (pay for entry-level staff may be as little as ¥100,000/month) so it is very much an *ai shigoto* - a labor of love. Love, that is, that aspires to a 'higher purpose' - a purpose that is oddly 'clean' of too many associations with actually being an anim fan. As this source commented, "If I had gone to Comic Market, I would probably have lost business. If I had a Sailor Moon phone card or a Ranma pencil that I was using around my colleagues, I probably would have lost respect."

The kind of people most animators could admire would therefore never be Gainax, but rather Hayao Miyazaki, who is seen as having gone up through the ranks the hard way until he could bring his vision (of making great children's films) to the world. Katsuhiro Otomo - whose success and 'respectability' is evidenced as much through his anime as his ad designs for major corporations like Suntory and Canon - is viewed in much the same way. One would note, of course, that this view finds incompatible being both a dedicated anime fan and possessing a higher 'vision'; despite the fact that Yamaga has been quoted as saying that he wrote *HONNEAMISE* in part as a reaction to the 'messianic' conclusion of *NAUSICAA*, and despite the fact that *HONNEAMISE* is clearly more coherent than *AKIRA*. Subjectively, *HONNEAMISE* has beaten both films for top regard among English-speaking fans in the last three Internet polls of the rec.arts.anime newsgroup. per-



haps it's not

that being a fan and shooting for a higher vision is seen as incompatible so much as that, among the industry, 'higher visions' are seen as indelibly stained if they happen to have been made by otaku.

OTAKU NO VIDEO was not a financial success, despite good coverage in *Anime V* as well as *NewType*, where its backer Toshiba EMI took out five full-page ads for it. "Out of 6 video rental stores near me which get almost all the new releases, only one bought ONV and they didn't even buy the second tape," relates the animator. As fate would have it, *OTAKU NO VIDEO* was released in the year the Japanese 'bubble', the economic boom of the 1980s, burst, making anime not the highest priority in people's finances. Even more disastrous a coincidence was the 1991 media circus around the arrest of Tsutomu Miyazaki, rapist, murderer, and mutilator of four young girls - and otaku, after which the term took on a very dark meaning indeed and the prospects of any video release calling itself *OTAKU NO VIDEO* were even darker.

"Maybe there are a lot of people in the industry who would have bought [ONV] if they were not afraid to be seen owning a copy or watching it," he concludes. "Some animators were offended that someone would portray animation

companies

like that. They wanted to be seen as the people who make children's dreams come true and such." The irony is that there are plenty of people in the industry who are like those portrayed in *OTAKU NO VIDEO* - their world their work, fourteen hours a day. Despite the negative connotations of being a fan, there is at least a bit of fan in every animator. It's not that they didn't see some of themselves in ONV, it's that they didn't want to see it. The general feeling on a little-known OAV on the life of an anime studio, *TALKING HEAD*, by Mamoru Oshii (director, *ANGEL'S EGG*, *URUSEI YATSURA 2: BEAUTIFUL DREAMER*, the *PATLABOR* films) sums it up: "That film is the truth. That's why it's such a lie."

Alice In Chains, "Brother"

Were Gainax contemporary Americans rather than contemporary Japanese, they would most likely be recognised as a species of bohemian artists; weird, mocked, but tolerated, even admired by many. It is by no means obvious, of course, that the typical otaku possesses the artistry and romantic spirit of those at Gainax. But it was those at Gainax who were the first to proclaim themselves publicly as otaku, thereby earning the right to articulate what the word stands for. American writers on Japan have often compared its conformity to that of their own country in the

1950s. As William Manchester said of that era's Beat movement, "they were honest men offended by the sterile myths" of their times. "Exotic lifestyles were suspect. The mere fact that members of the movement said that they were different put them beyond the pale ... (they were) said to live in what they called 'pads', surrounded by unwholesome books and records. They didn't pick up after themselves. Their beds were unmade ... and (they) did disgraceful things in the dark."

"I shambled after them as I've been doing all my life after people who interest me," said Jack Kerouac in *On The Road*, "because the only people for me are the mad ones ... the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars ..." People who are different try and refuse their unhappiness through their art; their darkness then becomes a backdrop against which to make a brilliant display. What happens, though, when you can't make your art matter to you any more? Cobain wrote, "I haven't felt the excitement of listening to as well as creating music for too many years now. I feel guilty beyond words about these things." Only the darkness remains.

SHINSEIKI *EVANGELION*'s literal translation would be *NEW GENESIS EVANGELION*, but its writer and director, Hideaki Anno, has indicated that it should be rendered in English as *NEON GENESIS EVANGELION*, for reasons, he says, that will be made clear as the series progresses. *EVANGELION* begins in 2015. Fifteen years before, the new era was ushered in with what nearly proved to be the fabled millennial judgement, when a giant meteor struck the Antarctic icecap. In the aftermath, half of humanity perished. The recovery was miraculous; manufacturing and transportation were restored and even the shelves of convenience stores were overstocked. But there was a deadened acceptance of what had happened, and the shortage lay among the new generation, the numbers of children. The human race attempted to artificially induce its future through genetic engineering. Then came the strike of aliens calling themselves the 'Angels', warning mankind of total destruction if they



did not cease their evolutionary research. Old Tokyo had been deluged after the disaster of 2000, and the seat of government moved inland among the high mountains of Nagano prefecture. There, Tokyo 2 was under construction - but it was only camouflage for the secret center prepared for the day of the Angles' return - New Tokyo 3, Interception Fortress City. Within were made the 'Evangelion' battle robots, meant to be humanity's protectors. Among their pilots were two of the quiet, reserved children of the new century - Ikari Shinji and Rei Iyanami. Watching over Ikari is his 'elder sister', Katsuragi Misato.

In the studio, on July 10 1995, a cloudy, rainy day in Tokyo, Hideaki Anno wrote these words :

"The worldview (of SHINSEIKI EVANGELION) is) colored with a pessimistic vision. Actually, I started the story with a setting from which I had purged all feelings of optimism. A fourteen-year-old boy (Ikari Shinji) is afraid of getting close to other people. He tries to live in a closed world, making attempts to get to know him useless, and ruining efforts made to try and understand him. Convinced that, since he feels abandoned by his father, he is an unwanted person, he is yet a coward, unable even to commit suicide.

A 29 year-old woman (Katsuragi Misato) also keeps her contacts with others as light as possible. She protects herself by running away into relationships that are strictly on the surface. They are both extremely afraid of being hurt. They might both be thought of as being unsuited to be heroes, lacking the strength of self that marks such a person. And yet I made them the heroes.

It is said that "To live is to change". I started this production with the desire that they and the world change by the time the story reaches its conclusion. That is my genuine sense of things. I am able to put all of myself into SHINSEIKI EVANGELION - a self who for four years was a wreck, unable to do anything. I began this thinking just one thing: "I mustn't run away" - after having done just that, run away, for four years - where all I was doing was simply not dying.

I thought of this production with

the feeling that "I want to see if I can put these feelings on film." I know that this is a senseless, arrogant, and difficult course of action - but it is my objective. I don't know what the result will be ... because the story has not yet ended in my mind. I don't know what will become of Shinji or Misato, or where they will go. This is because I don't know what the staff will be thinking as we go on.

I feel that this is irresponsible ... But it is also natural, given that we are striving for a synchronization of ourselves and the world of the story. At present this is the only theory I can use to create, despite the risk of being 'derivative'. That is the only place where our 'original' exists, after all..."

Hideaki Anno's words were made public when he left them at the end of the first collected volume of Yoshiyuki Sadamoto's EVANGELION manga; an anti-suicide note, as it were, written to mark a beginning. SHINSEIKI EVANGELION premiered on TV Tokyo's Channel 12 at sunset, 6.30 p.m., October 4, 1995. By pure coincidence, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, came to an end at that same time, leaving behind the days of penitence. "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, and ye shall afflict your souls" says Leviticus. Descending towards the Tokyo to come are the 'Angels', from *angelos* in ancient Greek, the messengers, bringing destruction and judgement from above. Rather than wait for salvation, a saviour is built with the hands of the craftsman: *Euangelion*, which meant in that same language good news; it was translated into Old English as *gospel*. A gospel for a new genesis, a new origin, brilliant and lurid as the irresponsible, the obsessed members of Gainax. Men must face their angels, even as they face their daemons, who have the same creator.

Pearl Jam, "State of Love and Trust"

Confusion as one theme melts into another; Toshio Okada characterised this chaos as the crucible of Gainax's creation. As you might object to a Westerner being a fan of something which was never made for him, like Japanese animation, it might be objected that this article's



approach is questionable, as it attempts to associate two things which, on their face, have nothing to do with one another - Western music and Japanese animation.

But this association is not new; Gainax started it in the 1980s, listening to Einstürzende Neubaten and syncing their breakthrough DAICON IV OPENING ANIME to ELO's 'Twilight'. The streams of culture cross themselves, on your radio and your video, and this may have nothing to do with the intentions of artists east or west - or any attempt to, as it might be referred to in America, "cross-market to that all-important 18-to-24-year-old demographic". It has to do with how you feel about what is being said by both parties; their combination, perhaps, a consequence of the spirit of youth, that swirling sea where confusion can give rise to a new form of life, struggling to emerge before the currents take you down to the wisdom of the still and silent. Cobain shot himself; three nights afterward, Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder exhorted a concert hall in Washington, D.C., with these words: "Don't die. Swear to God." Find, find your place; speak, speak the truth.



The author would like to express his profound thanks to Mr. Toshio Okada and Gainax for their assistance in obtaining the information which was incorporated into this article.

THE ANIME FX INDEX

At the end of our first year of monthly publication, here's a handy index to help you locate that article you need right now without spending hours looking back through your 1995 back issues of ANIME UK and ANIME FX. (What's wrong with that? - Ed.) It lists all feature articles and all items reviewed in alphabetical order by category, and the issue number in which they appeared. News items, fanzine reviews, etc, have been omitted from this index.

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武装完了

奴を殺れるのはワタジだけ。



ZEIRAM

The current trend in Hollywood appears to be towards a "more is good" approach, with budgets spiralling towards and beyond the insane. This is especially true of SF movies, where plot and characters are too often sacrificed on the altar of cutting-edge special effects. There's a horrible tendency to forget that the best science fiction starts with a good idea, rather than a really nice bit of computer morphing.

'Zeiram' (or 'Zeram', as it's sometimes called) is obviously not a mega-bucks movie. But thanks to a sprightly air of innovation, it manages to rise beyond its limitations, and while we are clearly not talking about a 'Blade Runner', it certainly succeeds on a level of pure entertainment, and is just as enjoyable as most of the recent glut of Hollywood SF flicks.

The two central characters are Iria and Zeiram, the former a bounty-huntress with a slightly dubious past history, the latter an artificial organic weapon which has gone amok and needs to be brought back. While Zeiram has some impressive firepower, Iria (ably played by Yuko Moriyama) is more than a match for it. Or rather, she would be, were it not for two bumbling Earthlings, electrical engineers Kamiya and Teppei (Yukihiro Hotaru and Kunihiro Ichida), sent to investigate the power drain caused by Iria's computer set-up. They stumble into the zone where she is battling Zeiram, and she must save their skins as well, or she'll lose her licence.

As stated, this is undeniably a cheap movie, but unlike some, you're never quite sure whether much of it is an intentional joke. For example, Iria's computers appear to be actually a selection of drum machines: this is either total penny-pinching on a scale undreamt of in a professional movie, or an in-joke of sublime subtlety. Or perhaps both, for the movie certainly needs every yen it can get its hands on. While Zeiram itself is an impressive Giger-esque creation, complete with dripping tentacles, his little henchlings look like discarded designs from David Cronenberg's remake of 'The Fly'. Well, to be more accurate, they never look like anything apart from men in rubber suits, but even allowing for this, it's hard to tell what they're TRYING to look like.

Far better not to have bothered with them, in my opinion, as Zeiram and Iria are quite enough to fill the movie on their own. Even the Earthlings are to a large degree superfluous, human McGuffins whose only purpose is to extend the running time by bumping into things, freeing Zeiram, and generally getting in poor Iria's way. Not that the viewer minds, because the battles between Iria and Zeiram are the most entertaining and exciting bits of the film even if they, almost inevitably, end with Iria pulling out an even bigger weapon with which to blow the critter away. Zeiram then mutates into something with a different number of limbs and keeps on coming. Repeat for about 90 minutes.

One nice factor is the almost complete lack of background. While in many other movies, this might be annoying, 'Zeiram' does it with such innocence that it seems natural. You don't know where Zeiram, or Iria, come from; you don't know who she works for, or why, yet none of this impacts on the film to any great extent. Of course, it may all be explained in the anime (which I've studiously avoided) but since there's no sign of it receiving an official release in this country, you'd better get used to the movie's casual ignorance!

This refusal to explain anything reminded me of 'Highlander', which similarly never bothers with major plot points, such as why people get chosen to be immortal, how decapitation kills them, and which part of Scotland Christopher Lambert's accent comes from. Again, none of this seriously impacts on the enjoyment factor.

While listing Western films with parallel themes, we might want to throw Richard Stanley's 'Hardware' into the ring. While it in itself was notable for the number of ideas inspired by other movies (everything from 'Paris, Texas' to 'Hellraiser'), it also had a gutsy heroine taking on a seemingly invincible opponent in a small space. Similarly, it was notable for the lack of effective male characters: just as in 'Zeiram', they flap around doing nothing particularly helpful or useful.

This ties in to some extent with what Helen McCarthy wrote about 'Sol Bianca' and 'Plastic Little' in the last issue of Anime FX. Iria's sex is all but irrelevant: no-one, least of all her opponent, seems to take much notice of the fact that she is female. There appear to be few, if any, concessions made to the lecherous element among the movie's apparent teen male audience. While one of the Earthmen definitely tends towards this end of the spectrum, even he doesn't even dare try to relate to Iria as an object of desire. I wouldn't quite go as far as to call 'Zeiram' feminist, or even post-feminist, and I'd be a liar if I denied Yuko Moriyama is cute, yet I can honestly say it doesn't matter.

Given the aforementioned target viewers, it's likely that a good part of the movie's income was derived from selling spiffy model kits, of Zeiram, Iria and the various bits of hi-tech hardware featured in the movie. Bandai are never ones to pass up a merchandising opportunity, so a couple of years later came 'Zeiram 2'. And clearly the makers remembered the proverb "If it ain't broke, don't fix it", for they deliver a near-identical movie, albeit one with a noticeably larger budget.

This approach to sequels is by no means novel. Mad Max 2, Evil Dead 2, Tetsuo 2 - these were, more or less, remakes of their predecessors. With these creations, it's as if the directors were saying "Here's the stuff I wanted to do first time round, but couldn't afford". 'Zeiram 2' seems to be similarly themed: the



LIVE & KICKING
by Jim McLennan

central idea remains unaltered, and there's no shame in trying to do it better justice.

One example will suffice to show how closely the two movies are related: a scene in the first had Iria deflect one of Zeiram's missiles with her armour, ricocheting it off to destroy a tower in the background. This sequence is repeated, virtually shot-for-shot in the sequel, except that Iria now does a 360-degree roundhouse kick to deflect the missile. I suppose this could almost pass for some sort of story progression.

Otherwise, about the only significant twist to the story occurs near the start, when we discover that Zeiram has been modified to act as Iria's aide, and slaughters a crowd of assorted thugs who are menacing her. However, this nod to 'Terminator 2' (another big-budget remake) doesn't last long: one swift bit of violent reprogramming later, it's back to the malevolent cyborg we know and love.

Teppei and Kamiya turn up once again, though mercifully seem to have learned their lesson and are not over-relied upon to extend the plot this time. Iria's computer, Bob, is also back, looking less like a member of the Human League, but still suffering abuse at the hands of various parties, keen to see Iria fail in her mission. And most importantly of all, Yuko Moriyama returns as Iria, with notably improved kung-fu and, yes, bigger guns.

The sequel is generally superior - another common factor with the counterparts previously mentioned - with better pacing, fewer slack moments, and less embarrassingly naff men-in-rubber-suits. Indeed, just one such creation is apparent, an awful looking dog/lion thing, which fortunately gets kicked off a roof after minimal screen time. Director Keita Amemiya now seems to have a firm grasp of how to handle both the fight sequences and, especially, the less frantic scenes. The latter jar the senses much less than in the first film, where they occasionally felt like the cinematic equivalent of driving into a wall, stopping the movie dead in its tracks.

This greater success of 'Zeiram 2' partly contradicts what I said at the start about bigger budgets not necessarily being a good thing. But there is a lower limit; the original 'Zeiram' had eyes bigger than its belly, with a budget too small for its aspirations. Though this defect is rectified in the sequel, we are still talking about an amount of money that would hardly buy Arnold Schwarzenegger's left bicep. Yet you get the feeling that throwing more money at the screen wouldn't really improve things: Amemiya knows his restrictions, and carefully chooses to operate within them. When a movie gets bigger, creative talent tends to be replaced by accountants inevitably reducing the amount of originality and inventiveness on view. Given that these factors are major strengths of the two films, any dilution would be highly detrimental to its cause overall.

So what we have, are a pair of movies that would be regarded as almost insignificant in the Hollywood scheme of things, yet which exude an imagination and charm in excess of their finances. The sequel is certainly the better (and can be enjoyed on its own) but both are pleasant entries in the quirky field of Japanese SF.

Post-script: Ah, those meaningless coincidences which help brighten life up. During the writing of this article, I was sent a copy of "Terminal Force", which plays almost like a Hollywood version of 'Zeiram'. Directed by SFX wizard William Mesa, an extra-terrestrial babe comes to Earth to fight a taciturn villain with a neat line in cloaks. In this case, she's hunting a crystal to save her civilization from extinction, but this is obviously just an excuse for lots of things going BOOM. The movie lobs cops 'n' robbers into the mix, with both acting as the same kind of nuisance as Kamiya and Teppei. Brigitte Nielsen makes a fine alien - I'm sure there'd be a sizeable market for model kits - though the purpose behind her leather bra is never explained. A chunk of the film's power is lost on video (both to the pan-and-scanning, and it looks like the censor took a bit as well) but the end product is cheerful nonsense that won't overtax anyone's intellect. Out to rent, January 10th, on our old friends, Columbia Tristar.

Meanwhile, 'Zeiram' will be released by Manga in December, and is currently available on import laserdisc (as 'Zeram') on Fox-Lorber Home Video. Depending on sales, I imagine 'Zeiram 2' may follow in due course.

Other news

East 2 West are following up their release of "Wicked City" with a trio of Hong Kong releases slated for next year. Leading the pack, and eagerly anticipated in this corner, is John Woo's "Heroes Shed No Tears". This is often regarded as Woo's first "proper" movie, being the one where he discovered the joys of ultraviolence, after a long spell of making romantic comedies. These films are also expected to be released on laserdisc, though no details of price are yet available. Also due out on disc soon is 'Heroic Trio' (see AFX #6) from Made in Hong Kong. Further titles from them are also expected to get the LD treatment, with Nikita-clone 'Black Cat' the most frequently heard title.

Meanwhile, across in Hong Kong, the number one box-office title, at time of going to press is... Paul Verhoeven's stripperama sleazefest 'Showgirls'. A major flop in America, it looks to have found a more receptive audience in the Far East, with figures in the same league as the last Jackie Chan film. While I doubt I'll be allowed to write about 'Showgirls' next time, it does give me a good reason for going to see it - isn't it amazing what you can get away with in the name of research?!





AD 2179
A CENTURY
AFTER
IMMIGRATION
FROM EARTH,
CYBER-GIRL
SOLDIER IS
BORN

ARMITAGE III

アーミテージ

アーミテージ

THE ARMITAGE PAPERS

by Julia Sertori

ARMITAGE III is a science fiction tale packed with detail. So packed in fact, that a surprisingly large number of the details are only hinted at within the story itself. Japanese fans have already had the chance to learn more about Mars of 2179 by reading the fake newspaper articles included with the video releases. Supposedly excerpted from 'Wendy Guthly's column in the Incidental Martian's Chronicle', they are actually notes by the scriptwriter Chiaki Konaka, jokingly listed as the 'translator' in the IMC's credits.

Although so much of Pioneer's animation work is now done in Korea, ARMITAGE has the least 'Korean' look of any of their recent releases. BLADE RUNNER has provided such detailed reference materials for so many anime designers, that the reproduction of Ridley Scott's Los Angeles is probably second nature to many creators. There are also plenty of in-jokes for the hard-core anime fan. The craft that brings Ross to Mars bears an uncanny resemblance to Atsushi Takeuchi's most famous design from the past, the *Sol Bianca*. Sharp viewers might also like to look out for background references to MOLDIVER, TETSUJIN 28 and EL HAZARD, in episode one alone! But design is not ARMITAGE's strongest feature; instead it's the script by Chiaki Konaka.

For some reason, Konaka shares the writer's billing on episode one with old-SF-hand Akinori

Endo. Since Konaka holds sole credit for the rest of the series, we can assume that Endo's role was as a consultant world-builder, helping his less-experienced

cohort work out the fiddly bits. If I ever needed to design a fully-functional SF universe, I wouldn't say no to Endo's help. His scriptwriting in the particular field of SF includes CYBER CITY OEDO, GUNDAM 0083, V GUNDAM and FIVE STAR STORIES, all of which share certain themes with ARMITAGE III.

THE FINAL FRONTIER

Seventy years ago, mankind began the long process of terraforming Mars. 'Red to Blue' is the motto, but it will be many generations before Mars is truly habitable. The air is still too thin for human beings, and the cold can be crippling, so Mars' human colonists live beneath the dome that now closes in the vast canyon known as the Marineris Trench. Like Hong Kong and Singapore before it, the city of Saint Lowell has become a bustling metropolis simply because there is nowhere else for the citizens to go. Although the Trench is hundred of miles long, the colony has expanded with extreme rapidity, and the city of Saint Lowell resembles much older cities back on back Earth, packed with cramped skyscrapers and dark streets.

There's a telling quote in Konaka's notes about the part played by the Martian setting: '...[terraforming] has been so successful that Earthlings now think of Mars as practically on the other side of Asia.' As the Pacific Century begins for us, Konaka has much to say about Japan's interaction with other Asian economies. Buried beneath the slam-bang action of ARMITAGE is a corporate thriller rooted firmly in Konaka's perception of life in the 1990s. The Conception and Hu-Gite cybernetic corporations both work in the same tiny field, and are continually trying to outdo each other with new formats and better models. Konaka claims he was inspired by the large corporate battles of recent years, such as Sega versus Nintendo, IBM versus Macintosh and even (just maybe...) Sony versus Pioneer. The big difference is that none of these companies ever



took corporate politics to such extremes that they threatened the stability of an entire planet.

MARS NEEDS WOMEN

With such a harsh environment, and so much to do, Mars has become the leader in cybernetic engineering, with robots forming its main exports back to the motherworld. The original colony was built with the aid of robotic labour from Earth, and these are known in Martian slang as the 'Firsts'. As Martian industry developed, the Conception Corporation brought out the 'Second' model, deliberately designed to resemble the human form. The female models sold particularly well in the male-dominated frontier town of Saint Lowell, and Mars became the centre of the solar system's robot industry. But in 2179, Conception's hold on the robot market is falling, as the cheaper, more attractive models from Hu-Gite sell so much better. The time is right for a new model, but how can you improve on perfection? The 'Seconds' are already every man's dream. You can pick the way your 'woman' looks and specify the way you want her to behave. She'll do literally anything you want, she'll never grow old and she'll never answer back. And if you're ever bored with her, just flick the switch in her forehead to turn her off and do a part exchange.

The people of Mars, and especially the burgeoning female population, are getting increasingly annoyed at the role of robots in their society. It's bad enough if you travel several thousand million miles to find you've lost your job to a machine; things get a lot worse if you discover that your boyfriend can literally chuck you in for a better model, preferring to live with the willing, obedient, ageless little slave girl he bought at the shops.

A WOMB WITH A VIEW

The brown squidgey stuff hits the rotating blades when a killer starts bumping off Martian women. Naomi Armitage of the Martian Police Department gets assigned to the case, and finds herself sharing the legwork with a cynical Chicago cop, Ross Sylibus, newly transferred to Mars after an 'incident' back on Earth. But the duo don't really have to work that hard, because Rene D'anclaude, our friendly neighbourhood psychopath, is broadcasting his murders on national television. While the BBFC might not look too kindly at long, lingering close-ups of women begging for mercy before being shot in the head, D'anclaude's more than happy. This is because his TV campaign is there to show the irate people of Mars that the much-discussed 'Third-type' robots already exist, and that they have already slipped unnoticed amongst

the population.

As people realise that the next job-stealing 'enemy' is already walking among them, all hell breaks loose. Things could only get any worse if they found out the ultimate selling point of the Third prototypes. I can't give too much away, except to say that 'more human than human' is a phrase that haunts more than one cyberpunk film...

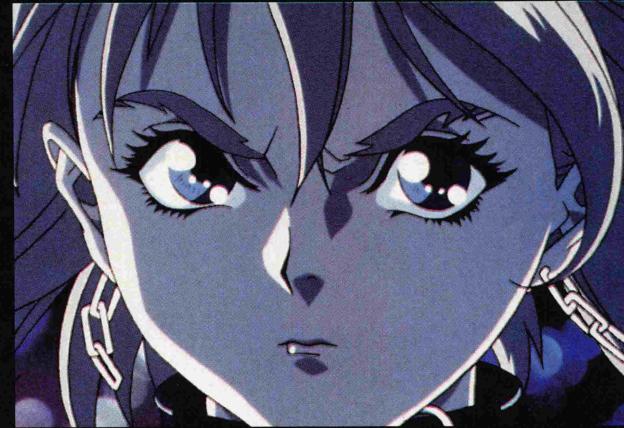
ARMITAGE THE FOURTH (?)

Armitage and Ross track D'anclaude to the Martian old town, where Armitage stops just short of flaying him to death. Something that certainly isn't a spoiler is that Armitage is herself a Third, and she has a personal interest in seeing that at least some kind of justice is done. After exceeding her authority as a police officer, Armitage goes on the run in search of Julian Moor, a fellow Third. If all the Third prototypes are 'sisters', Julian is their little 'brother'. For unexplained reasons, the creators of the Thirds made a single male version, who has turned out to be an embittered, androgynous boy. But Julian's affinity with computers has allowed him to access the secret files on the Thirds, and that makes him the only one who knows where the survivors are.

All the other Thirds are 'creative' types, but Julian is an exception. Perhaps that is why he gets on with Armitage, since she too is something of an anomaly. She claims to have 'grown up' like a normal human being, and while the rest of D'anclaude's victims are dancers, singers and artists, Armitage is a police officer. There are shades of ROUJIN Z in the ARMITAGE subplot. If she really is a Third, why isn't she a simpering, nubile 'creative' like all the others? Although she's introduced as an ineffectual, underdressed little girl in episode one, she soon blows her cover and reveals that she is endowed with superhuman strength and incredible speed. What kind of slave is she supposed to be...? As the plot thickens, and 'observers' from Earth start to make unwelcome calls on the MPD chief, D'anclaude starts to drop a few hints. Could it be that Earth's main interest has never really been in uncomplaining sex slaves, but in obedient, invincible war machines. There are chilling moments in the anime which hint at Armitage's true profession. When she runs into two would-be rapists at night, the sadistic glee with which she tortures them is indistinguishable. Their crime? Not attacking her, because Armitage can easily look after herself. Their crime was calling her a 'monster'. Armitage may be an android, but her humanoid brain brings with it the human need for love and acceptance, and an all-too-human sense of insecurity.

Ross Sylibus is heading in the opposite direction, desperately trying to distance himself from humanity. A sub-plot, which looms large in the first 'Endo'-assisted episode but then sinks without a trace, is the reason for Ross' transfer to Mars. As befits all the best cop-buddy movie straight-men, he's got something against his partner, mainly because a haywire First killed his

site direction, are able to download their brains into cyberspace. Can humans do it too, and if so, does the creation of Thirds mean that humans can now download their own memories into immortal android bodies? And who made the Thirds? We assume it's an illegal operation out of the besieged Conception Corporation, but how come Asakura, the main suspect can



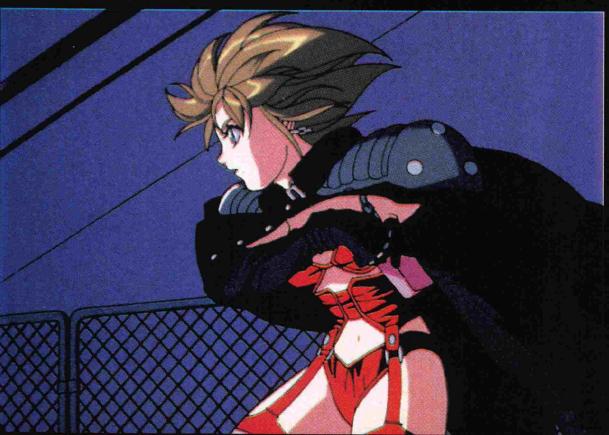
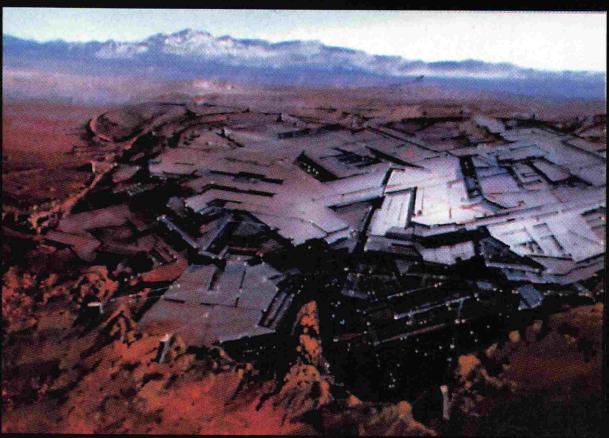
ex-partner back in Chicago. Ross hates himself for failing to act on time, he hates cybernetics for slowly replacing his injured body with more and more prosthetics, but above all else, he hates robots. But Ross respects Armitage as a police officer, and he alone is the one to treat her as a real person. When Ross, albeit in an angry moment, says: 'You're cold, lady,' it's the first time anyone has accepted Armitage the android as Armitage the woman, however insultingly.

THE TRUTH IS IN THERE

Although there are many similarities between ARMITAGE and BLADE RUNNER, it also has a lot in common with TOTAL RECALL. Apart from the Martian setting, there's also the potential that many apparent inconsistencies in the plot are actually clues for later episodes. Issue three of The Incidental Martian's Chronicles includes a mysterious map of the solar system, assigning one of the known Thirds to each planet. Is this an artistic conceit, or an integral part of the initial manufacturing plan? Thirds

both be 'temporarily unavailable' to see Armitage but also 'a man who left years ago' when Ross Sylibus tries to interview him. Somebody is lying, and it'll take all four episodes of ARMITAGE to get close to the truth.

Armitage clings to a photograph of her as a child, with her 'father', and regales Ross with tales of her life in the school playground, but such 'memories' are illogical. According to her 'brother' Julian, all Thirds roll off the construction line fully-formed, and never change their initial appearance. If that's the case, then either Armitage's memories, like Rachel's in BLADE RUNNER, must be false or else she's a bare-faced liar. She can never have had a childhood because she never 'grew up' and her childhood memories are either a glaring oversight in Chiaki Konaka's script, or a deliberate red herring with a pay-off in a later episode. But on the evidence supplied so far, it wouldn't be the first time that the ARMITAGE team kept a deliberate surprise up their sleeves. In an inversion of the traditional practice



with OAVs, they reserve the best till last. Normally, an OAV production will expend all of its important (read: expensive) action in the first episode to hook the viewers. But the animation in episode one of *ARMITAGE* is visibly inferior to that in the following volumes, almost as if the makers were trying to lull the public into a false sense of security. When it comes to *ARMITAGE III*, remember to watch out; nothing is ever quite as it seems.

With thanks to Jonathan Clements, PJ Evans and Jim Swallow for info and robot-spotting.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Naomi Armitage

A deliberate mix of punk bondage fashion with the staple anime 'little girl lost', Armitage is the representative of all the Thirds. She dresses like the sex object 'Seconds', but as numerous criminals have discovered, she's more than able to protect herself. In the first episode she is presented as a stupid, ineffectual girlie, and the relative heights of her and Ross make them look more like father and daughter. This only makes it all the more shocking when Armitage flashes into action as an unstoppable warrior. (Voice: Hiroko Kasahara)

Ross Sylibus

A hulking, Earthbound flatfoot, Ross Sylibus has transferred to Mars in an attempt to forget the death of his last partner. He brings virtually nothing with him, and appears to have left nothing, and no-one behind. The incident back on Earth left Ross needing several artificial implants, especially on his smashed legs, although does his best to keep this information secret. He hates robots, and has no desire to become like one. (Voice: Yasunori Masutani)

Julian Moor

Bitter, frustrated, and a merciless tease towards Armitage, Julian is a brilliant mind trapped forever in the body of a child. His ability to interface directly with Martian cyberspace has turned him into an unofficial link between the surviving Thirds, using the codename 'Pluto'. (Voice: Emi Ogata)

René D'anclaude

Never trust an armed Frenchman in dark glasses trying to get a corpse-sized suitcase through customs. René D'anclaude paints himself as a serial killer, but there's a lot more to him than that. Serial killers don't have a private army of bodyguards, access to national television, military mech prototypes and robotic clones. And when Armitage sees a picture of D'anclaude with her 'Dad', the alleged creator of the Third line, she starts to get suspicious. (Voice: Ryusei Nakao)

Seconds

Cute, innocent and reliably dim, the Seconds perform many menial tasks on Mars. Originally made in both male and female models, the pulling power of a cute robot was realised early on, and the 'female' version predominates. Seconds can be distinguished by the emergency off-switches located on their heads. Someone starts using modified Seconds as suicide bombers in a later episode.

ARMITAGE III - STAFF & PRINCIPAL CAST

Planning

Tohru Miura
(*SOL BIANCA, TENCHI MUYO!*)

Director, Chara design

Hiroyuki Ochi
(*ORGUSS 02, BASTARD!*)

Designer

Atsushi Takeuchi (*SOL BIANCA*)

Opening sequence Director

Hiroyuki Kitazume
(*GUNDAM, MOLDIVER etc etc etc*)

Screenplay

Chiaki Konaka

Screenplay (ep. 1 only)

Akinori Endo
(*CYBER CITY OEDO, 5 STAR STORIES, GUNDAM 0083 et al*)

Animation directors

Kunihiro Abe, Shinya Takahashi, Naoyuki Onda

Art Director

Tokuhiro Hiragi

Music

Hiroyuki Namba (*LADIUS*)

Sound Director

Masafumi Mima

NAOMI ARMITAGE

Hiroko Kasahara

(*IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLOR - Azalin*)

ROSS SYLIBUS (aka **SILVERS**)

Yasunori Masutani

RENE D'ANCLAUDE

Ryusei Nakao

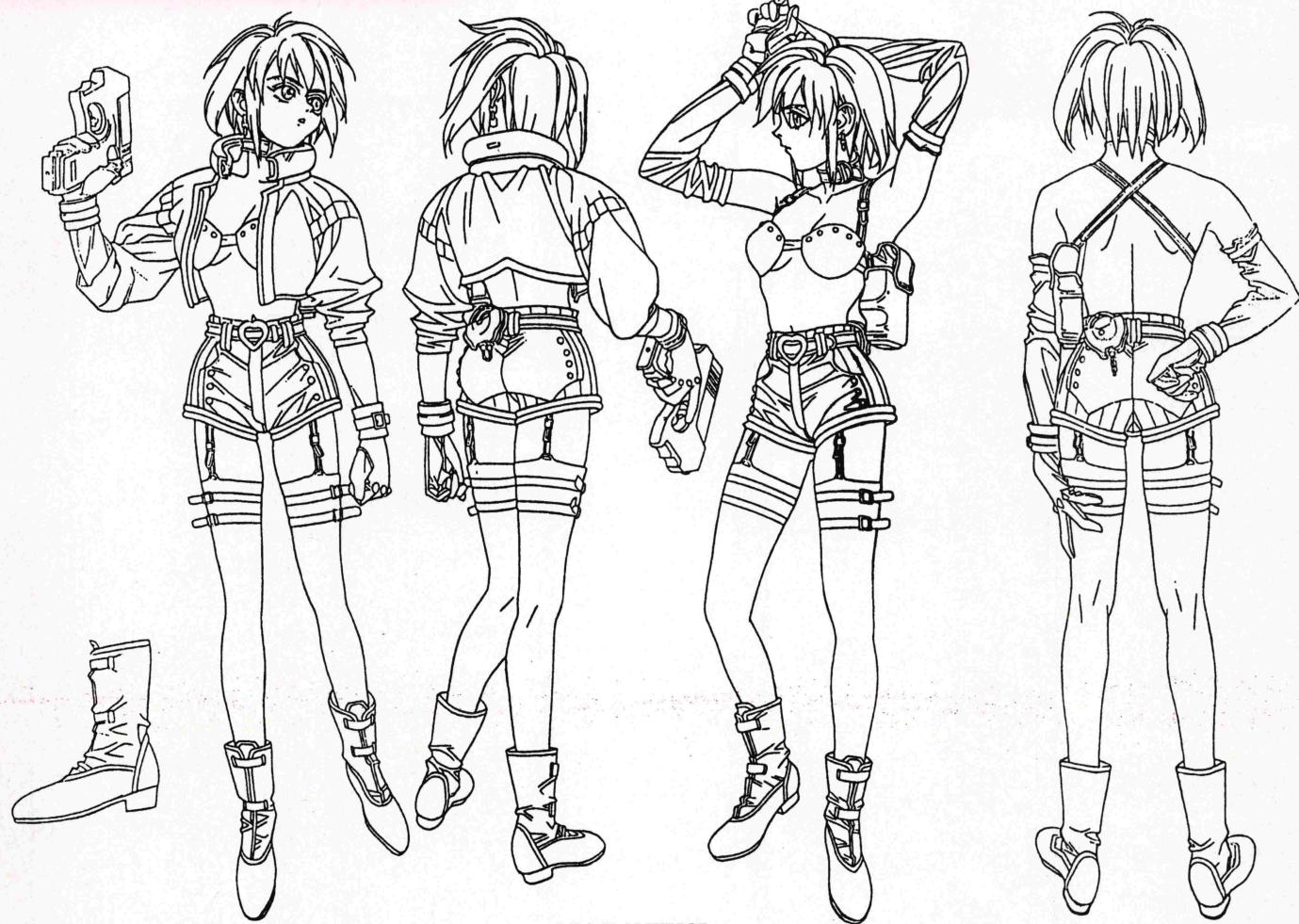
(*PLASTIC LITTLE - Roger*)

JULIAN MOOR

Emi Ogata



ARMITAGE ART

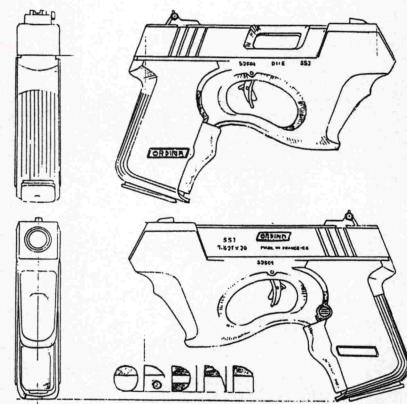


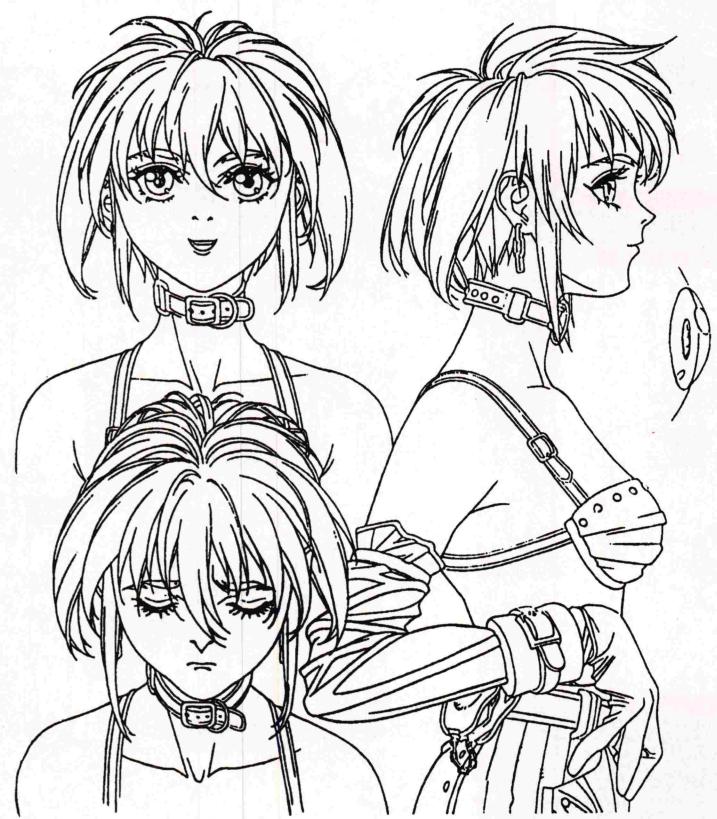
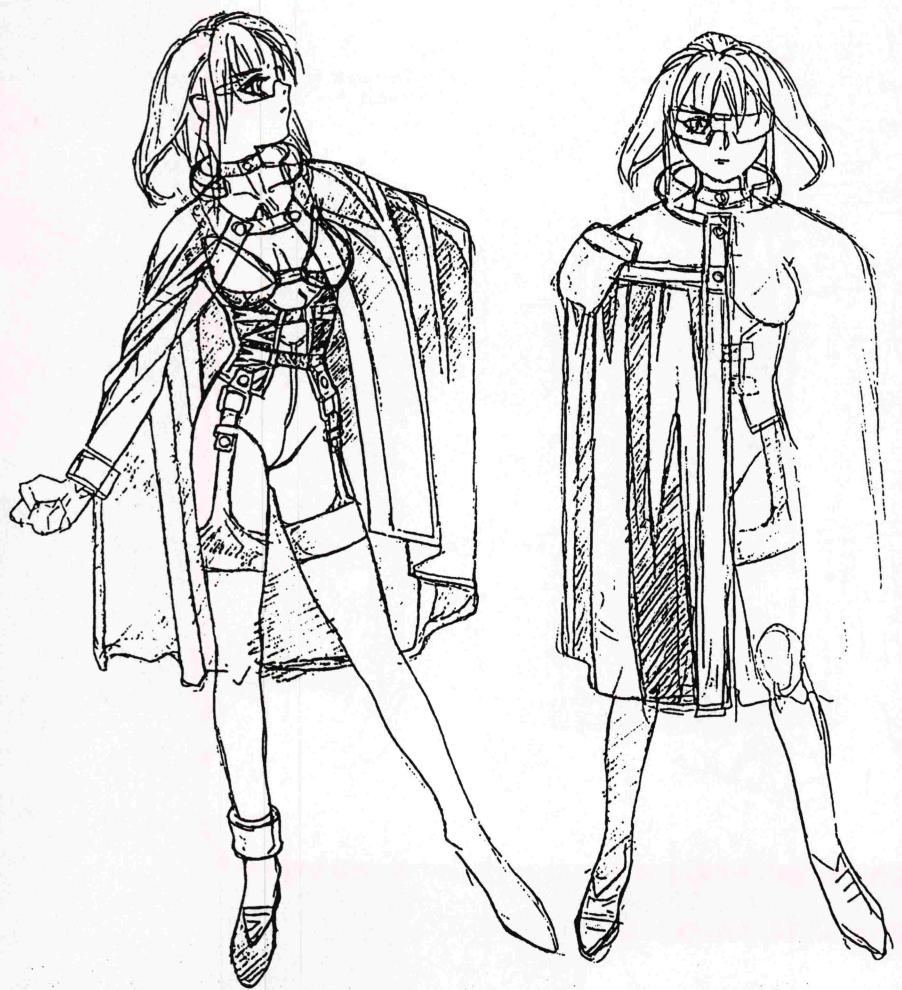
NAOMI ARMITAGE



(Sound Effect:
K-CHI !) - Glasses
click into place

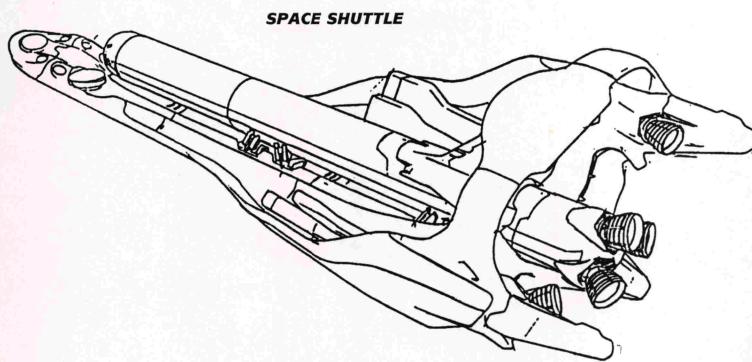
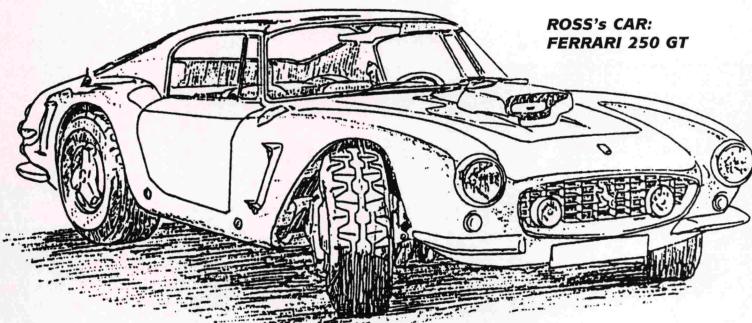
ARMITAGE'S GUN: The Ordina SSJ (7.62mm)
fires 7.62mm x 20 rounds

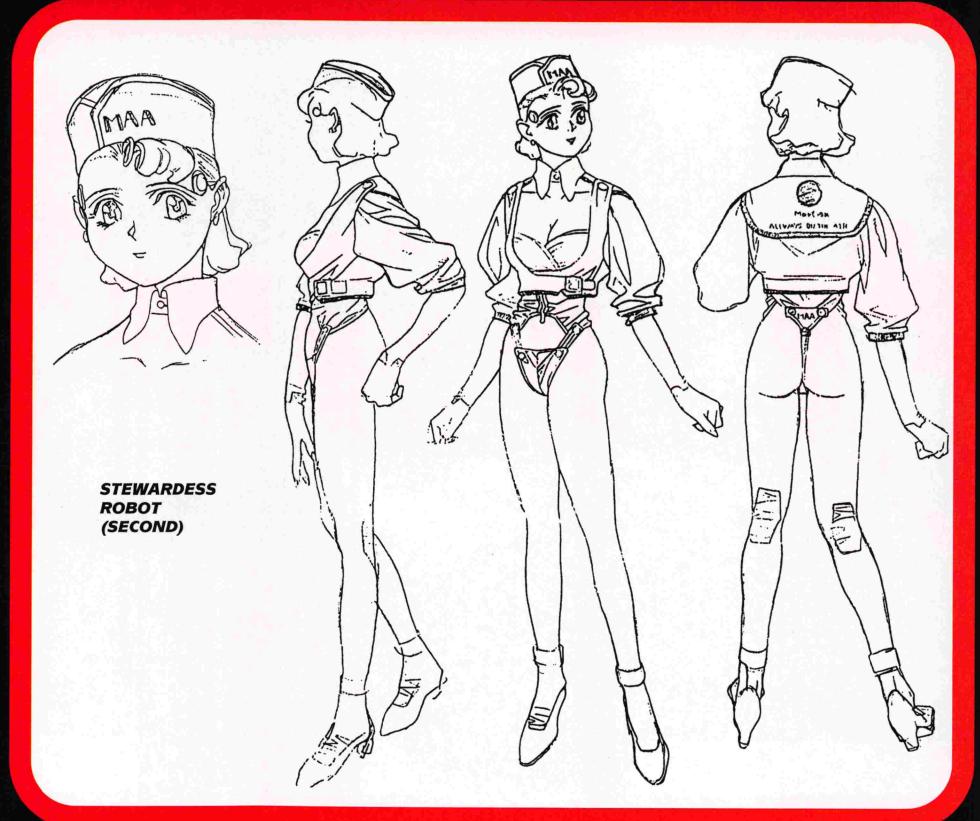
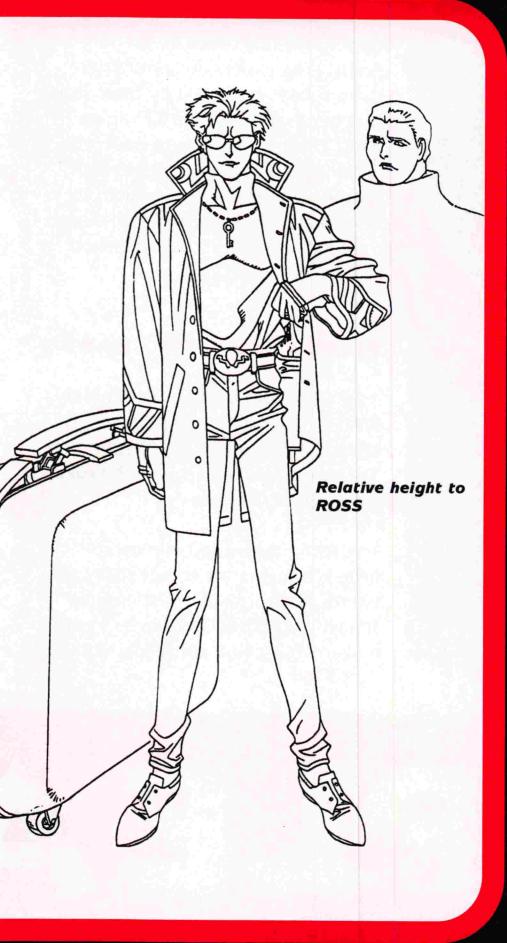
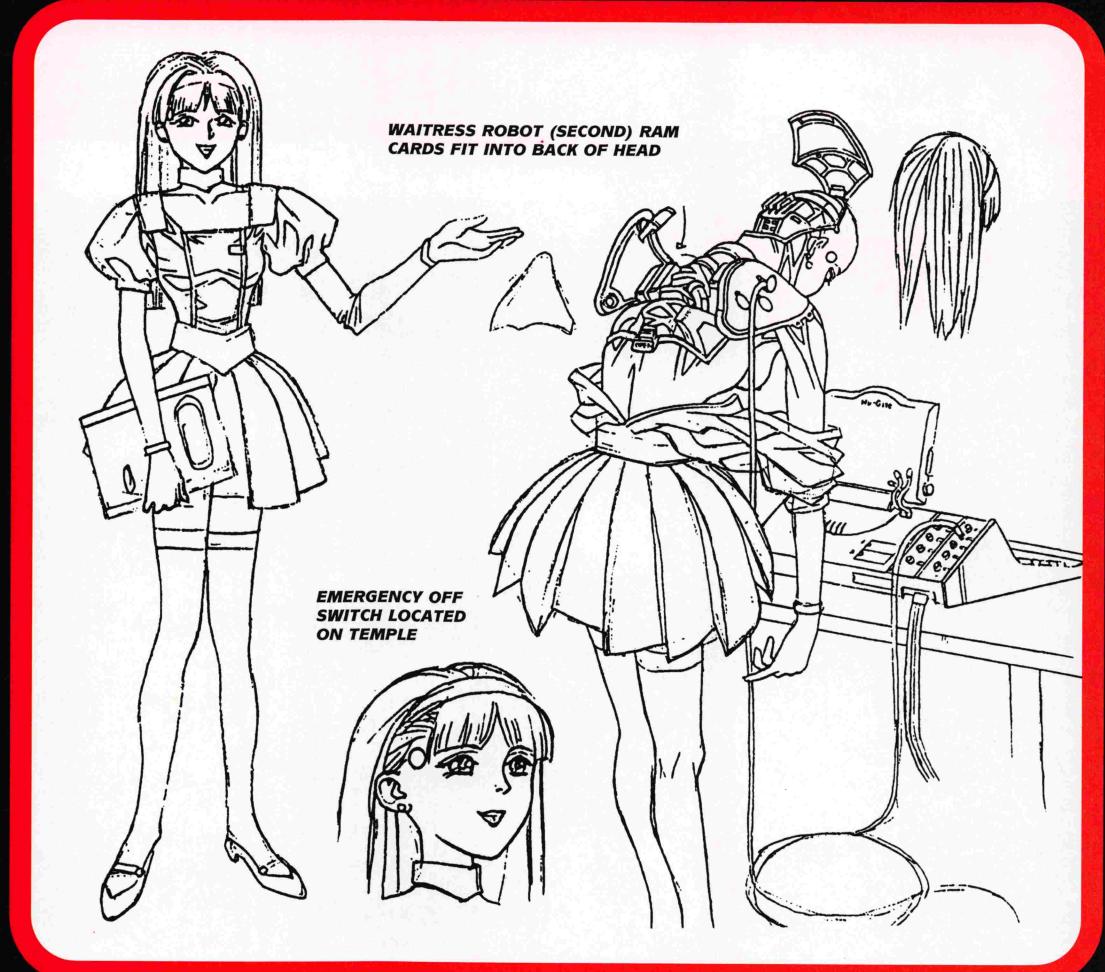
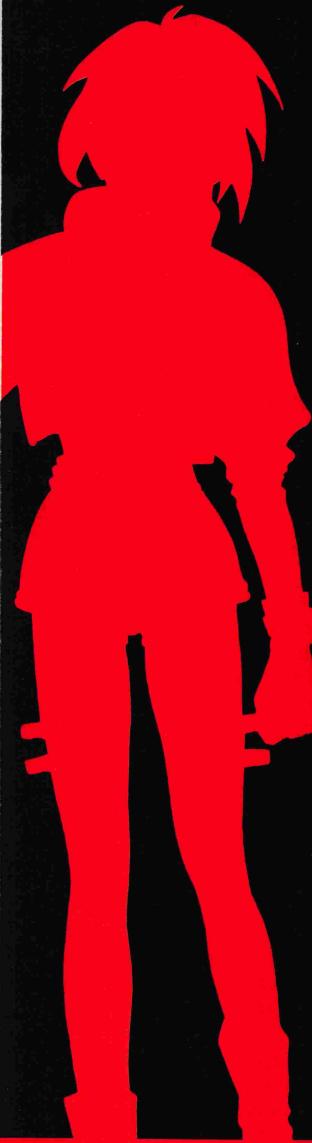






ROSS SYLIBUS







SFExpress



ULTRAMAN

In our last issue we began Jolyon Yates' overview of the series which put Giant Rubber Monsters irrevocably on the map of Japan. Here's a further instalment of monster mayhem.

THE WEAPONRY

Aside from the 'inbuilt' rays and attacks of the various monsters, there were a range of weapons that the Science squad could use. The 78cm Mars 133 rifle with its telescopic sight fired the deadly Spacium Ray. Arashi wielded his own special weapon, the 50cm Spider Shot - still a fairly big gun by any standards. But the deceptively dinky 25cm Supergun wasn't wrongly named; it fired the powerful Pencil Bomb.

THE CRAFT

The Special Science Squad had a number of supercraft, all code-numbered SSS. The main craft was the Jet Beetle SSS III, 18.5 metres long with a top speed of Mach 2. It could be fitted up for space flight as the Hydrogen Boosted Auxiliary Craft SSS117; it could also carry a small submarine for underwater operations like those in ep1 or ep24. (The expendability of these baby subs is indicated by their serial numbers - S21 in ep1, S25 in ep24!) There's also a mini-craft, the Small Beetle Vehicle, a mole-like vehicle (the Berucidar) which shows up in ep29, and, for those everyday journeys, the standard Science Patrol Car.

EPISODE LISTING - PART 2

10) 1966/9/18 (10) NAZO NO KYORYU BOCHI (THE MYSTERIOUS DINOSAUR CEMETERY) TP
Tetsuo Kijoh D Tadashi Mitsuta
FX Koicchi Takano

The formula having been established, things start to get really weird. A mad taxidermist creates Jiraasu (Jirass), a Godzilla suit with a lizard frill and a spray-job. (I think

THE COMPLEA

A guide to the first incarnation of one of Japan's national institutions, by Jolyon Yates

ウルトラマン

it's the MOSURA TAI GOJIRA suit.) Reporters from Shonen (Boy) Graph arrive in a 'monster car' to discuss Nessie with a dinosaur expert. He reckons Nessie is a diplodocus. 15 years previously he picked up Jiraasu on a field trip (the Ultraman Encyclopaedia claims to Loch Ness, but it didn't look like Scotland to me). The reporters sneak after the scientist and see the monster in Lake Kitayama. A poacher, played by Saito Yasuhiko (Ipppei-kun in ULTRA Q) poisons the lake fish on which Jiraasu feeds. The enraged monster stomps on the scientist and runs into Ultraman. Ultraman's vocabulary has been limited to "Shuwart!" since he merged with Hayata, but here it's expanded to "Shya shya, Huya!" and an Ultra-laugh, "Shuwahahaha!" The fight involves more histrionics, including a face-off, an Urutora Panchi (Ultra Punch), and UN ripping out Jiraasu's frill and using it as a matador cape, and there's a sad violin solo when UM kills Jiraasu by puncturing its lungs (the Urutora Kasumi Giri technique, apparently).

This is the first episode directed by Mitsuta, and as in the next one a lot of quirky camera angles are employed, shooting from shin-level and so on.

11) 1966/9/25 (12) UCHU KARA KITA ABARENBO (RASCAL FROM SPACE)
TP Tatsuo Miyata D Tadashi
Mitsuta FX Koichi Takano

This tries for the weird whimsy of the fondly-recalled Kanegon episode from ULTRA Q (ep15) but goes to such an extreme of strangeness, and has such a ridiculously silly monster, that you can actually feel some fuse blow in your brain when it gets too much, too unbelievable, and you have to will yourself into realising this spectacle, this crazed Sesame Street meets the World Wrestling Federation, is not a delusion but right there on the screen!

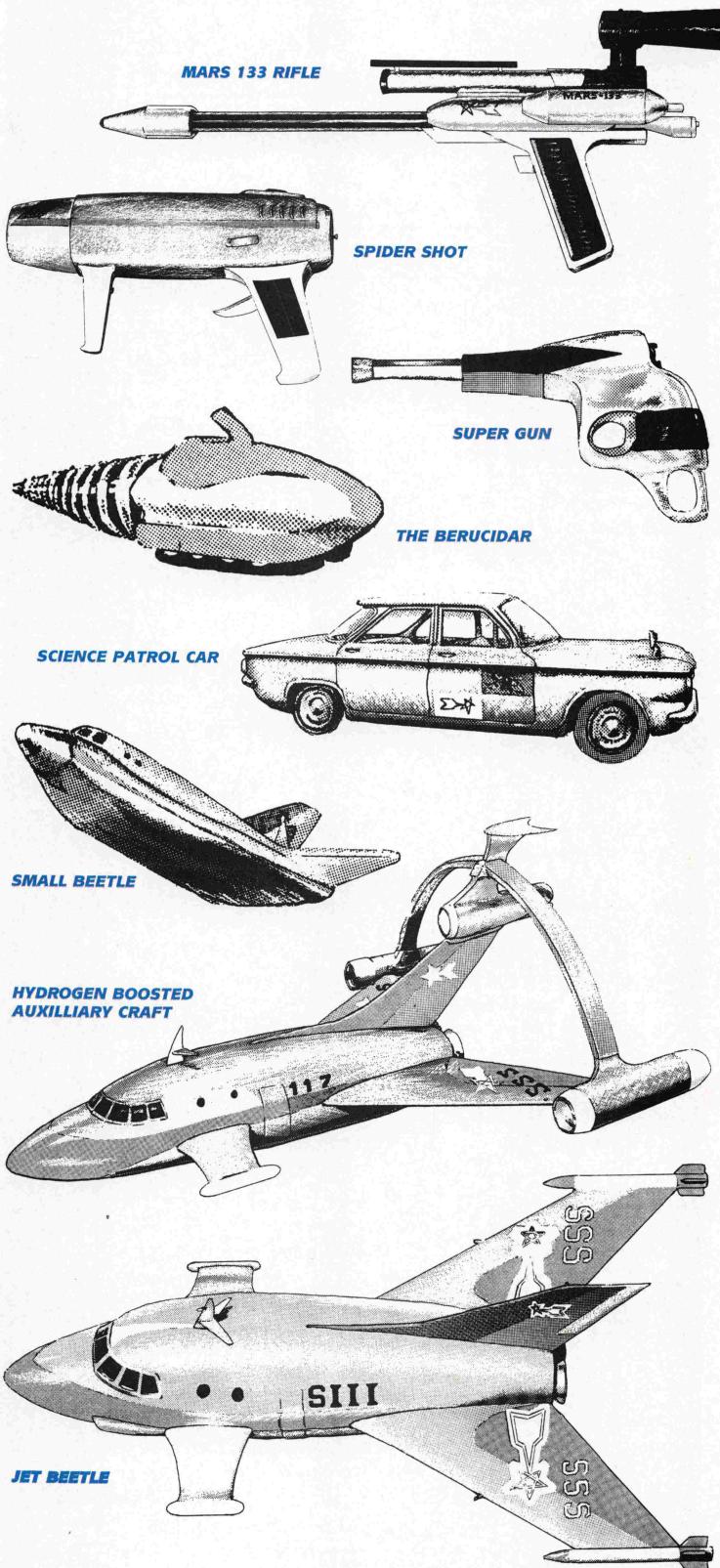
Some children are playing (to the kids' theme from the Kanegon episode) when a falling star deposits a ball which turns into marbles, then a toy race track. The

children will it to become a birthday cake, but it only takes on a new form for a few seconds. The ball becomes a piano. Scientists study the space ball, and at a press meeting it becomes a dream bride. But one reporter is a thief who wills it to become first blood, then a rocket to steal it from the laboratory. He turns the ball into a monster, Gyango (Gango) in order to scare his neighbours for a laugh! The backgrounds, especially for his mad laughing shots, are bright bursts of colour. And the monster is a biped with a peculiar patchwork chest and revolving radar dish ears, and most astounding of all, it's wearing CLOGS! If my apartment had a chair I'd have fallen off it. Next, the thief accidentally enlarges Gyango and gets crushed in the debris. Gyango goes stumbling through the town like a clumsy boy, and has an ear shot off by maser tanks. The Ultraman arrives. He leapfrogs Gyango (Umatobi/Horseleap) and is sat on, but escapes by tweaking Gyango's nipple (officially known as the Kusurugi Senpou technique). Upset by Gyango's boyish antics, UM hacks off his other ear! The thief recovers and wills Gyango back into a ball. Stupendous!

12) 1966/10/2 (11) MIIRA NO SAKEBI (THE MUMMY'S CRIES)
TP Keisuke Fujiwara D Hajime
Tsuburaya FX Hajime
Tsuburaya

After the delirium of the last two episodes, this one impressed me with its lively editing and camera work, and its spooky early sequences are as good as ULTRA Q. The initial monster, the apelike Miira Ningin (Mummy Man) is very Q-like, but the Kirin/pantomime horse Dodongo is a letdown.

Dr. Iwamoto unearths a 7000 year old mummy. Back in the lab, something invisible reactivates it and soon the Science Squad is chasing it through the sewers. Arashi blasts it with the Spider Shot, but with its last breath it summons up Dodongo (Musra sound effects). Ide has invented the 'Barrier Machine' to shield Arashi while he zaps the dragon. Ultraman rides it but gets



AT ULTRAMAN

THE CREW - part 1, SFX TEAM

SFX DIRECTORS

Koichi Takano except ep2, 3, 5 (Tohru Matoba); ep12, 13 (Hajime Tsuburaya); ep37, 38 (Sadamasa Arikawa). See below.

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

Masataka Yamamoto, Jun Oki

AIDES TO DIRECTORS

Shigeru Tsuburaya, Kento Joh

PHOTOGRAPHY

Kazuo Sagawa, Kiyoshi Suzuki

ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHY

Yohzo Inagata, Masao Nakabori, Takashi Kitaoka, Yoshiro Sasahara

LIGHTING

Tetsuya Kobayashi

ASSISTANT LIGHTING

Masanori Andoh, Yoshiro Yukimura, Tadao Ohira, Kazumi Koike

ART DIRECTORS

Tohru Narita (designer of Reddaman and Ultraman). **Shin'ichi Ose**

ASSISTANT ART

Tatsuro Fukuda, Hirohisa Yamazaki, Hiroshi Ishikawa, Keisuke Suzuki



ABOLAS

OPTICAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Minoru Nakano

ASSISTANT OPTICALS

Naohiro Nomura, Noboru Ishikura, Bunzoh Hyohdoh, Seigo Higuchi

PRODUCTION MANAGERS

Hiroshi Uemura, Akira Kutoh

GAFFER

Shigeo Kurakata

GRIPS

Sadashige Numazato, Tetsuroh Nakajima

PRODUCTION ART

Yoshiko Hirata, Toshiyuki Kawana, Keiko Sasaki

RECORDING

Tokuko Suzuki, Kunie Urashima

PROGRAMMING PRODUCTION

Akio Matsuo, Koh Unemoto

SFX Director **Koichi Takano** was the Supervisor of Special Effects in URUTORAMAN GURETO (ULTRAMAN GREAT/ULTRAMAN TOWARDS THE FUTURE, 13eps) and was Director and SFX Director of URUTORAMAN SUTORI (THE ULTRAMAN STORY 1984/7/14).

SFX Director **Tohru Matoba** is referred to in MARKALITE magazine as Tetsuo Matoba, and was SFX supervisor for SPECTRAL-MAN.

SFX Director **Sadamasa Arikawa**

Arikawa is sometimes known as Teisho Arikawa and worked on DAIKAIJU BARAN (GIANT MONSTER VARAN/VARAN THE UNBELIEVABLE, 1958), DENSO-NIN-GEN (US: THE SECRET OF THE TELEGIAN, 1960), Gojira movies from KING KONG VS GODZILLA (1963) to KAIJU SOSHINGEKI (DESTROY ALL MONSTERS, 1968), KESSEN NAKAI NO DAIKAIJU (US: THE SPACE AMOEBA), and the Hong Kong giant ape movie HSING HSING WANG (THE MIGHTY PEKING MAN, 1977/8/10).

CREW LISTING TO BE CONTINUED

bucked so he kills it! What a swine!

13) 1966/10/9 (13) OIRU S.O.S. (OIL S.O.S.)

TP Tetsuo Kinjoh D Hajime Tsuburaya FX Hajime Tsuburaya

Back to the straightforward rampaging monster plot, and signs of the Science Team getting a conscience. Pestaa (Pester) is a siamese-twin starfish with a fire-breathing bat's head at the junction and a craving for petroleum. When it attacks an oil refinery at the Keihin Industrial Area the team knock it out with dope missiles, but Ide feels bad about allowing the refinery to be set on fire. He is injured while fire-fighting. Ultraman kills Pester with his Spacium Ray, then uses his Water Jet (Urutora Suiryuu) to put out the inferno. Ide felt responsible for the consequences of his team's actions; Cap calls him "an excellent fellow".

14) 1966/10/16 (15) SHINJU GAI BOEI SHIREI (ORDER TO PROTECT THE OYSTERS)

TP Mamoru Sasaki D Akio Jissohji FX Koichi Takano

Not to be outdone by Mitsuta, Ultraman's best-known director Jissohji starts to get peculiar with camera angles, looking at reflections of the characters in hub-caps and peering at them from under cars. In episode 15 the camera crawls around the furniture.

A flabby toad-whale creature called Gamakujira (kujira means 'whale', as also used in a certain other monster's name which combines Go[rilla] with [Ku]jjira) waddles onto a road on the Ise coats and sucks the pearls out of a truck with its vacuum-tube tongue. The Science patrol arrive to kill it but their equipment breaks down and they have to spend the night listening to the monster gurgling in the dark. Next day they bomb it, but it still attacks some bathers wearing pearls. The Science Squad finally resorts to the 05 Jet, a rocket which they shoot up Gamakujira's backside to fly it skyward where Ultraman strikes it at Mach 5 (Kuuchyuu Taitari / Mid-Air Bodyslam) and the monster explodes. Fuji picks up some of the pearls from its bowel and goes on a shopping spree.

15) 1966/10/23 (14) KYOFU NO UCHU SEN (THE HORRIBLE SPACE RAY)

TP Mamoru Sasaki D Akio Jissohji FX Koichi Takano

School children display their drawings of monsters (Ultradaijū like

Neronga, red King, Kanegon and, erm, Beethoven), but little Takashi draws a blob he calls Gavadon and his classmates mock him. He draws Gavadon again on a concrete pipe and it comes to life, thus impressing his friends. The wobbly blob makes a noise like rubbing glass with a sponge while groaning. Our heroes fly in and blast its tail off, but it takes a nap and then, at dusk, disappears. We hear a boy singing about the first star at twilight, the "Monster Star". The gang draw Gavadon again, with embellishments, and watch it come to life, swelling out of the pipe drawing. Gavadon B goes to sleep in a Tokyo street, and again it vanishes at sunset. They recreate Gavadon again and are upset when Ultrathug starts beating it up; but he shows mercy and flies it into space. At night a cosmic voice tells them of their new friends in the stars and reveals the constellations of Ultraman and Gavadon. A star falls from the Gavadon configuration's 'eye'! Sob! Next day the Science team are amazed to see the school children have covered their whole playground with monster pictures!

16) 1966/10/30 (17) KATOKU-TAI UCHU E (THE SPECIAL SCIENCE SQUAD GO TO SPACE)

TP Kitao Senzoku D Toshihiro Iijima FX Koichi Takano

A Jet beetle escorts the NAS 3 rocket as far as the upper atmosphere. Once alone in space, the rocket is hijacked by Baltan Seijin, who takes over Mori the astronaut. The Science squad fit out a Beetle with space boosters and Ide produces the Mars 133 blaster. Baltan flies his clones to Earth in his meteor ship, and Ide shoots them down with the Mars 133. Meanwhile the others have flown out to pick up Mori, but when he laughs crazily and gets evil under-lighting, they freak and crash on an asteroid. Mori changes into Baltan, Hayata into Ultraman. The Superugen Bariyya (Supergen Barrier) of Baltan II reflects the Spacium Ray, so UM cooks up an energy ring (Yatsuzaki Korin, 'Halo that Rends Into Eight Pieces') and slices Baltan in half lengthways. Back on Earth the Baltan horde is rampaging, but Ultraman happens to have Teleportation ("Heh!") and zips to the scene. The horde gathers into a giant Baltan, whose forcefield reflects even the Halo ("Hyeh!"), but UM negates it with his Ultra-Eye Spot (Urutora Ai Supotto) and chops Baltan in half again! Dr. Iwamoto flies Fuji and Hoshino in his Phoenix rocket to rescue the marooned team members.

17) 1966/11/6 (16) MUGEN E NO PASUPOTO (PASSPORT TO INFINITY)
TP Keisuke Fujikawa D Toshihori Iijima FX Koichi Takano

This one is very weird in the ULTRA Q way. Mr. Yesterday, a scientist investigating a blue rock from the Baron Desert, is a little alarmed when it turns into a 2-clawed banana-shape, the room spins and he disappears! The Science team visit his cottage, feel a rumble, and there's Yesterday once more. The rock flies off. Another scientist finds it and his lab warps (using the same technique as in the last ULTRA Q episode). The whole room is filled by what looks like a Tachist painting, but when Arashi throws the blue rock the scientist reappears. Arashi puts the blue rock in a 'barrier case' with a red rock, and the two stones mate. The resulting Buruton (Bullton, sound FX from UCHU DAIKAIJU DOGOROA, 1964) is a beachball with funnels and exists in "the 4th dimension", which means that people in the area find themselves upside down or running up stairs into the sky or jumping off cliffs into dustbins. When tanks attack, Buruton uses its "4th Dimensional ray" (an egg-whisk) to make them fly while forcing jets to crawl on the ground. When Ultraman arrives he is spun around and buried, but "Shuwatt!" he is free, using the Haisupin (Highspin) and zaps Buruton, crushes it, then - "Shatt!" - takes off. Hoshino is made a Science team member.

18) 1966/11/13 (19) YUSEI KARA KITA OTOKO (MAN FROM THE PLANET)
TP Tetsuo Kinjoh, Ryu Minamikawa D Mimachi Nonagase FX Koichi Takano

A choking mist descends on Tokyo; Dr. Morita says it came from outer space. (Morita is played by Yoshio Tsuchiya, who played in THE HUMAN VAPOUR [GASU NINGEN DAI ICHI GO, 1960] and THE INVISIBLE AVENGER [TOHMEI NINGEN, 1954], also in Kurosawa films [SHICHININ NO SAMURAI/ SEVEN SAMURAI, 1953, YOJIMBO 1961, AKAHIGE/ RED BEARD 1965, GOJIRA NO GYAKUSHU/ GODZILLA'S REVENGE 1955, MATANGO

1963, KAIJU DAISENKO, FURANKENSHUTAIN TAI CHITEI KAIJU BARUGON, THE KILLING BOTTLE 1965.) The team head out into the fog, making Hoshino stay behind with Fuji. The squad spots a creature which can climb walls like Spiderman, so Arashi torches its genitals with his flamethrower. The alien, Zarabu Seijin (Alien Zarab), a silver-helmeted humanoid with a sphincter mouth, sneaks into the team's base, and withdraws the mist when Hayata wields the Zero Rocket. Zarabu transforms into Ide and Fuji (NB : possessed/impersonated people in Ultraseries and KAMEN RIDER have extra eye makeup) and makes it back to its rocket. Hayata follows and sees the Zarabian has hostages, but Zarabu is aware of his presence and his secret identity! The alien takes Hayata back to Earth and tells our leaders he has Ultraman as an ally. But Hoshino has the Beta Capsule, and the boy's tears melt Hayata's bonds. Zarabu transforms into Nise Urutoraman (False Ultraman). Ultraman fights and burns him - "Hyakku!" - but he returns in ep. 33.

19) 1966/11/20 (18) AKUMA WA FUTATABI (THE DEVILS RETURN)
TP Tetsuo Kinjoh, Ryu Minamikawa D Mimachi Nonagase FX Koichi Takano

In Tokyo the Science Patrol and Dr. Fukuyama investigate a capsule unearthed in a worksite, and break out a blue container, but overlook a red container. At the Space Science Institute, Ide, Hayata and Fukuyama decide it was a Time Capsule and have found a plate inside containing ideograms warning of demon monsters. Lightning releases the long-necked fire-breathing beast Banira (Banila) from the red container, and electricity in the lab produces the blue Aborasu, melty bubble breather (Abolas : the creatures use Angiras and Varan sound effects respectively). The monsters fight through a stadium. The team shoot Banira and Aborasu melts it. Aborasu and Ultraman roll around with the monster slobbering foam and trying to stick its horn in him - "Akk!" - but he triumphs.

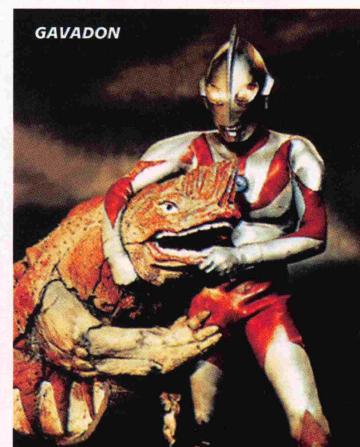
MORE NEXT ISSUE!



SCIENCE SQUAD SUBMARINE



ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR



ROBOTECH



ROBOCON 10

**The Official ROBOTECH (TM)
Tenth Anniversary Event
October 6-8, 1995 Grand
Hotel, Anaheim, California,
USA**

FRED PATTEN
reports on ROBOTECH's
own 'gathering of the
clans' in celebration of
ten years of
Robotechology.

ROBOCON 10 was a grand tenth anniversary gathering for ROBOTECH's creators and public alike. It was both intense and relaxed. The operative word was 'reunion', not 'convention'. As an occasion for ROBOTECH's fans and writers and voice actors to socialize together for a weekend, at the same hotel where the 4,000-fan ROBOTECH Convention had taken place in October 1986, it was an outstanding success.

Proactively everyone who had ever worked on any aspect of ROBOTECH was invited to be on the program. Many accepted; several brought their spouses and children along. It was practically a picnic scenario. The estimated attendance was 550, which was just about the maximum for this 'family reunion' atmosphere to work without becoming overcrowded.

But the three-day event, organized by brothers Thomas and Dennis Bateman, was almost obsessively ROBOTECH-oriented (with one exception). The first hit was the Dealers' Room. As soon as it opened on Friday at noon, about 200 fans swept through to buy up rarities before they got sold out. One fan had flown from Australia just to attend the ROBOCON, with a want-list from several Aussie fans. (A couple had come from Germany; the rest were from the U.S. and

Canada.) And there was a cornucopia for collectors. The three Volume 7's of Streamline Pictures' ROBOTECH PERFECT COLLECTION were premiered there. Carl Macek had arranged to provide fifteen copies of the ROBOTECH Production Style Guide, autographed by all of the leading voice actors; they were all sold within as many minutes. There were original production cels from ROBOTECH II: THE SENTINELS available, and mint copies of many ROBOTECH action figures and other collectibles that had not been available for eight or nine years. Artist Sean Bishop (ROBOTECH: ACADEMY BLUES) sold original comic book art. The main disappointment was that the enlarged ROBOTECH music CD which had been scheduled to debut at the convention had not been completed in time. And some fans thought the souvenir T-shirt should have had ROBOCON 10 on it, instead of just showing ROBOTECH mecha-art and Roy Fokker's VF-1 emblem.

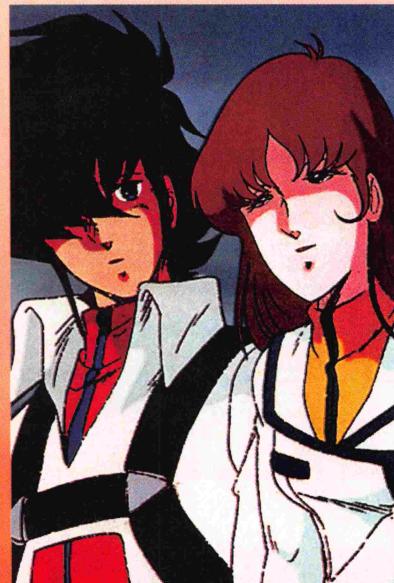
After the first couple of hours, many dealers had sold practically all their ROBOTECH stock. But other anime merchandise was ignored. Dealers who had brought general anime videos, CDs, models, magazines etc, complained that "nobody was buying anything at this con".

Friday's programming started with a presentation on Academy Comics' current ROBOTECH II: THE SENTINELS comic book by its creators, brothers John and Jason Waltrip. Carl Macek, ROBOTECH's producer, story editor and general creator, told about his current projects and future plans at Streamline Pictures. The most popular afternoon event was a panel on voice acting moderated by Greg Sengoff, ROBOTECH's director of voice dubbing and himself the voices of Khyron (in the MACROSS episodes) and Scott Bernard (in the NEW GENERATION episodes). The other panellists included Alexandra

Kenworthy (voice of Azonia), David Millburn (Louie Nicholls), Mike Reynolds (Dolza), and Dan Woren (Roy Fokker). This was a nuts-and-bolts presentation on how ADR (Automated Dialogue Replacement) recording - dubbing to pre-animated cartoons - is accomplished.

Friday evening started with an informal opening ceremonies which was mostly an autograph and 'meet ROBOTECH creators' session. The guests and the fans socialized together in a very casual atmosphere, totally unlike the 'media stars vs. their public' attitude at the commercialized STAR TREK conventions. The fans loved it. Next was a video presentation of the theatrical feature MACROSS : DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE? in Japanese with English subtitles. The final event was the one exception to the ROBOTECH programming. Ardwright Chamberlain, who was one of the ROBOTECH writers, is presently performing the voice of the alien Vorlon Ambassador Kosh on BABYLON 5. The Con Committee had felt that the fans would probably want to hear about BABYLON 5 as well as ROBOTECH from him, so his presentation was scheduled as a 'BABYLON 5 mini-con'.

Saturday was the biggest day. There were two tracks of programming starting around 10.00 a.m. Ardwright Chamberlain, Steve Kramer, and Greg Sengoff talked on 'The Making of ROBOTECH' from the staff writers' viewpoint. Five of the composers and music editors (Ulpio Minucci, Arlon Ober, Michael Bradley, Thomas A. White and Steve Wittmack) discussed 'The Music of ROBOTECH' - the original series, the unfinished ROBOTECH II: THE SENTINELS and the unreleased ROBOTECH: THE MOVIE. The afternoon was filled by three voice acting panels, arranged by each of the three ROBOTECH stories. The ROBOTECH MASTERS panel featured Bill Capeze (the Robotech Masters), Steve Kramer (Angelo



Dante), and Paul St. Peter (Zor Prime). The NEW GENERATION had Frank Catalano (Rand), Richard Epcar (Lunk), and Greg Snegoff (Scott Bernard). THE MACROSS SAGA presented Eddie Frierson (Lynn Kyle), Tony Oliver (Rick Hunter), Melanie MacQueen (Lisa Hayes) and Reba West (Lynn Minmei). The main event on the alternate programming track was a voice acting/ADR workshop presented by Tony Oliver and Dan Woren, where fans got the opportunity to find out how well they could do at dubbing. Other events were panels on 'ROBOTECH Online' (with Todd Hill and James Luceno); 'ROBOTECH Fan Fiction' (Aubrey Thonon and Peter Walker); and 'ROBOTECH: THE MOVIE' (Steve Kramer and Carl Macek).

Sunday evening's cabaret-style gathering, emceed by Tom & Dennis Bateman, was the highlight of the whole reunion. It was scheduled to open with a contest by Reba West and Michael Bradley, who would reprise their songs from MACROSS and THE NEW GENERATION to the original music tracks. But the music tapes could not be located in time from Harmony Gold's vaults. This caused Bradley to cancel out, but Reba West sang her four Minmei songs to an impromptu piano accompaniment by Ulpio Minucci, who also played 'The Way To Love' as a piano solo. This got a highly enthusiastic response. Next was a Trivia Contest, where 30 volunteers from the audience were asked questions by Greg Snegoff, hamming it up in his Khyron voice. 8 remained for a second round, and there were three finalists. The winner got a free ROBOCON 10 T-shirt plus a couple more anime T-shirts donated by Kimono My House. The Masquerade was tiny, with only two pairs, a Lisa and Minmei from MACROSS and a Rand and Annie from NEW GENERATION. Bateman gave a brief report on ROBOTECH's foreign popularity, demonstrated by MACROSS scenes dubbed in

Norwegian and what was announced as Russian (but later identified as Greek). Then came a voice acting demonstration. A scene from a MACROSS episode was shown with the sound off while Tony Oliver (Rick Hunter), Melanie MacQueen (Lisa Hayes) and Richard Epcar (Ben Dixon) gave a live reading of their lines. This was so popular that Greg Snegoff (Scott) and Frank Catalano (Rand) gave a similar live recreation of a scene from THE NEW GENERATION. The cabaret ended with all of the voice actors and Carl Macek invited up on the stage (they jokingly posed in a conga line) so the audience could take photographs and ask questions.

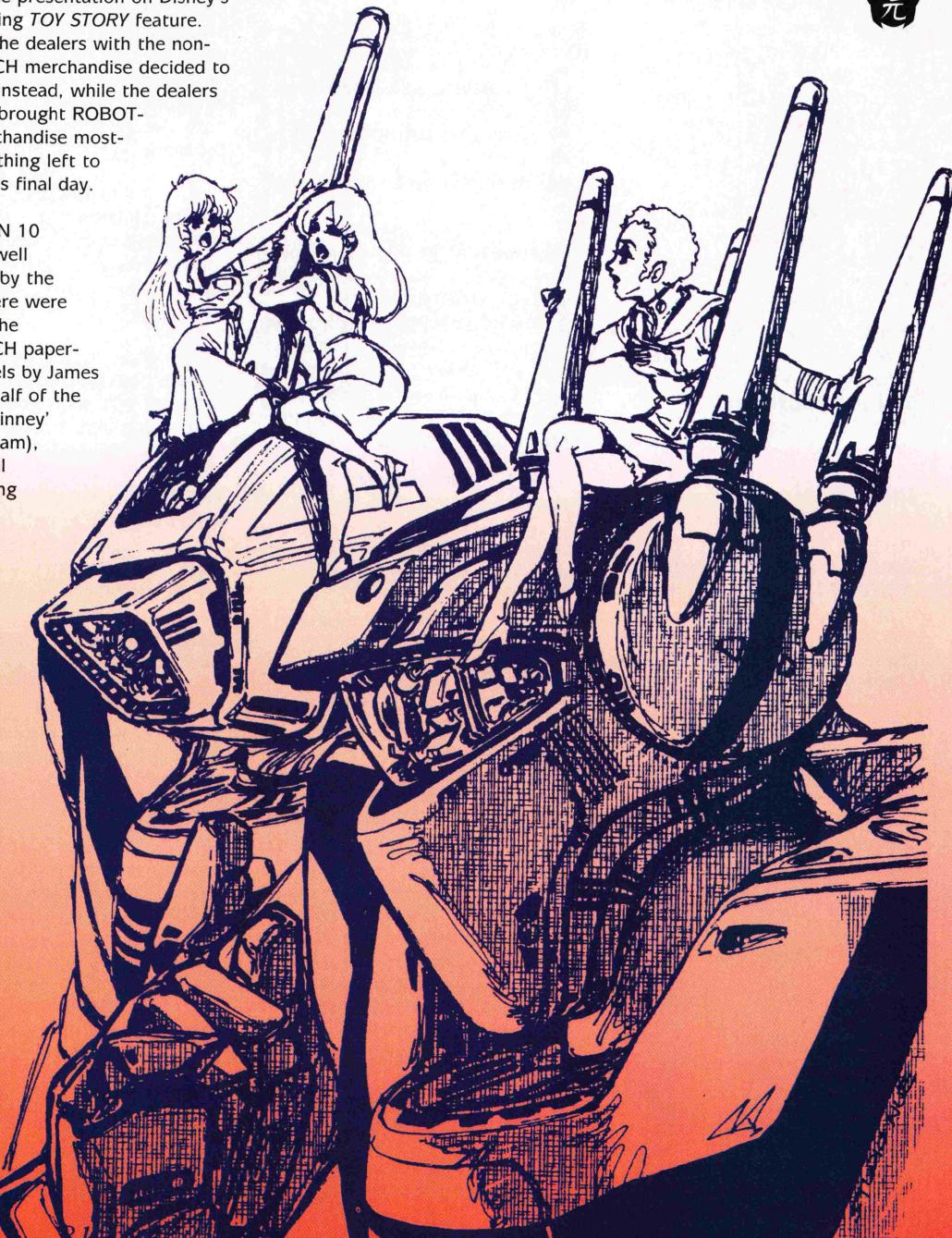
On Sunday, the Dealers' Room was practically empty. This was also the day of the nearby monthly Los Angeles Comic Book Convention, which this month featured both a personal appearance by John 'REN & STIMPY' Kricfalusi with several of his Spumco studio cartoonists, and the first public advance presentation on Disney's forthcoming *TOY STORY* feature. Most of the dealers with the non-ROBOTECH merchandise decided to go there instead, while the dealers who had brought ROBOTECH merchandise mostly had nothing left to sell by this final day.

ROBOCON 10
was still well attended by the fans. There were talks on the ROBOTECH paperback novels by James Luceno (half of the 'Jack McKinney' writing team), and a final voice acting

panel with Tony Oliver, Melanie MacQueen, Barbara Goodson (Marie Crystal), Greg Snegoff, Reba West, Mike Reynolds, and Wendee Lee (Vanessa Leeds). Carl Macek gave the main afternoon talk. He appreciated the fans' continuing enjoyment of ROBOTECH but gently turned aside urgings to revive ROBOTECH II: THE SENTINELS or other aspects of what he called unnecessary "sequelitis". He felt that ROBOTECH had been created by a unique combination of events and people which could not be reconstructed after ten years. Nor did it need to be. It still existed for those who wanted to enjoy it. Creativity ought to be focussed ahead, toward brand-new projects.

Macek received enthusiastic applause, but the attitude at the closing ceremony at 4.00 p.m. showed that this was still a ROBOTECH world. Chairman Tom Bateman gave what was described as a very emotional address. "After ten years, ROBOTECH has had its day in the

sun!" This had not been planned as a business or commercial event, although he was happy that fans had been able to find "treasures" to take home. It was a gathering of those who had kept ROBOTECH close during ten years, who had had the satisfaction of seeing it survive long after other TV animation of its day had been forgotten, but who had also been forced to listen to ridicule by otaku who denounced ROBOTECH as a butchered desecration of the true anime classics. "ROBOTECH is what brought us together! And with the comic books and novels still coming out, ROBOTECH is never really over!" (Thunderous applause.) But he rejected calls to make this an annual event, or to plan a 15th-year reunion. "Let's keep this weekend special." However, he did ask any fans who had video-recorded any events if they would make their tapes available for possible inclusion in a two-hour ROBOCON 10 souvenir tape which he and his brother hoped to produce.



INCOMING

JANUARY 1996

Industry insider Chrysanthemum Mordin looks into her crystal ball and predicts what you'll be buying in the first month of the New Year.

MANGA

ACADEMY COMICS LTD
ROBOTECH MECHANGEL #1
ROBOTECH II: SENTINELS Book IV #2
ROBOTECH: SENTINELS
Presents Feral World : Nightmare on Garuda #1

A.M. WORKS
A new company publishing manga influenced titles

PERVERT CLUB #2 by Will Allison

ANTARCTIC PRESS
This company specialises in dojinshi, or non-professional fan manga, and offers a diverse range of titles

FANTASTIC PANIC VOL 2 #2 by Satoru Yamasaki: Nee's search for a new magical item to help him become a 'hero' continues, with predictably disastrous results

F-III BANDIT #7 by Ippongi Bang: In a story entitled 'The Family Affairs of Mr. Death', Death gains a new helper in the form of a young girl who turns out to be more trouble than she's worth!

HURRICANE GIRLS #4 by Hiroshi Yukamo: Tale of the Demon Part 3.

MAGAZINE #42: This issue looks at Speed Racer and other Japanese shows that have appeared on American TV, & at the studio responsible for many of them, Tatsunoko.

SILBUSTER #14 by Ikkou Shahara **VAMPIRE MIYU #4** by Narumi Kakinouchi: Supernatural horror and creatures of the dark populate this chilling tale. **Recommended.**

NINJA HIGH SCHOOL #50 by Dunn & Various: Double sized 'landmark' issue.

NINJA HIGH SCHOOL VOL 8 TRADE PAPERBACK: Collecting more of the earlier NHS stories.

WARRIOR NUN AREALA BOOK TWO #3 by Ben Dunn: the manga influenced series continues.

CPM COMICS

CYBER CITY: PART THREE #2 by Tim Eldred and Studio Go! Benten gets closer to solving the vampire murders - & closer to his own death as well, as the explosive collar around his neck starts its deadly countdown!

DAIKAIJU ENTERPRISES

G-FAN #19: Giant sized issue, contains news on Godzilla Vs. Destroyer, Gamera II, and a fab free 1996 calendar.

DARK HORSE COMICS

You can always be assured of quality releases from this company, and a diverse selection of titles that don't rely on violence to entertain!

OH MY GODDESS SPECIAL : SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL by Kosuke Fujishima: More spiritual hijinks with those wacky goddesses

- poor ol' Keiichi!

LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH: CITY OF THE CHILDREN #1

by Otomo & Nagayasu: Otomo's powerful saga about hope and a mother's fierce devotion to her children continues.

GUNSMITH CATS #9 by Kenichi Sonoda: Nothing ends an argument quicker than a good fire fight - but can Rally and Minnie May remain friends after Minnie sees what has happened to her beloved collection of plush toys? **Recommended.**

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST #2 by Kosuke Fujishima: Miyuki and Natsumi are two beautiful police-women who seem to get into more than their share of trouble!

GODZILLA #8 by Ishida, Rivera & various.
3 x 3 EYES #4 by Yuzo Takada.

EROS COMICS

This company occasionally release Japanese erotic comics, but it's definitely all Mature Readers Only.

COUNTDOWN: SEX BOMBS #3

by Hiroyuki Utatane

PRINCESS OF DARKNESS #5 by Yuichiro Tanuma
SEXHIBITION #3 by Suehiro Gari

MANGA PUBLISHING

MANGA MANIA #31 by various: news, reviews and manga serials.

STREET FIGHTER II #15:

Continues the adaptation of the hit anime video. Manga continue to release collections of manga stories, and this month also sees the release of **APPLESEED BOOK 2** and the **MACROSS II** collection.

MANGAJIN

MANGAJIN #52: Japanese language & popular culture are explored in this extremely useful monthly magazine. (Relisted/delayed)

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

This company are not afraid to take chances, with offerings ranging from shojo (girls') manga and political manga to lighthearted comedy and more.

CRYING FREEMAN: THE KILLING RING PERFECT COLLECTION

by Koike & Ikegami

MAI THE PSYCHIC GIRL PERFECT COLLECTION VOL 3

by Kudo & Ikegami: Long out of print, this classic tale helped lauch manga as an international fan phenomenon, as one of the first English manga translations. **Recommended.**

MAISON IKKOKU PART 5 #3 by Rumiko Takahashi: Kyoko and Yusaku have their first big fight - which results in a broken leg!

Recommended.

MANGA VIZION VOL 2 #1 by various.

RIOT #4 by Satoshi Shiki: A fatal shot strikes down Billy, leaving Axel alone - and defenceless.

BIO BOOSTER ARMOR GUYVER PART 4 #3 by Yoshiki Takaya

FIST OF THE NORTH STAR

PART 2 #3 by Buronson & Hara

NAUSICAA PART 5 #7 by Hayao Miyazaki. **Recommended**

RETURN OF LUM PART 2 #6 by Rumiko Takahashi.

SANCTUARY PART 4 #6

by Fumimura & Ikegami

ANIMERICA VOL 4 #1: All the usual anime news/reviews, plus a focus on Buichi Terasawa, acclaimed creator of Cobra, Midnight Eye Goku and Kabuto.

BATTLE ANGEL ALITA PART 5

#7 by Yukito Kishiro: Alita learns that her beloved Doc Ido is still alive - but before she can find him, she must overcome betrayal!

RANMA 1/2 PART 5 #2 by Rumiko Takahashi.

ANIME: US RELEASES

AD VISION

CUTEY HONEY VOL 4 Subtitled : Go Nagai's often unclad heroine continues her battle against the forces of darkness.

DEVIL HUNTER YOKO SPECIAL EXTENDED VERSION

Dubbed

SHUTEN DOJ: THE STAR HAND KID

Subtitled: Another highly peculiar tale from the fertile imagination of master of horror, Go Nagai - trolls, Armageddon, time travelling and more!

ANIMEIGO

SPIRIT OF WONDER - MISS CHINA'S RING

Dubbed/Subtitled: A touching and amusing love story based on the Japanese manga of the same title.

MANGA ENTERTAINMENT

ANGEL COP VOL 6

Dubbed

GUYVER VOL 1

Dubbed

MAD BULL VOL 1

Dubbed

ORION

THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER

VOL 1

Dubbed: At last, this exciting tale is available on sell through video - the adventures of Nadia and her friends are classic viewing.

Recommended.

SECRET OF BLUE WATER VOL 2

Dubbed.

WICKED CITY LIVE ACTION

MOVIE Dubbed/Subtitled: Based on the anime of the same name, this is an excursion into the darkest reaches of this world - and the world beyond ...

PIONEER LDCA

TENCHI MUYO EPISODES 12/13

Dubbed/Subtitled: The adventures of the hapless Tenchi continue, as the impostor Zero tries to fulfil her mission -assassinate Tenchi!

SONY

STREET FIGHTER II

Uncut/General: Delayed from October.

SOFTCEL PICTURES

ANGEL OF DARKNESS VIDEO

Subtitled: Available in Uncut & Edited versions. Both **Mature**

Audiences Only.

F3 (FRANTIC, FRUSTRATED AND FEMALE) PART 2 Subtitled: Adult Material.

MAGICAL TWILIGHT 3 Subtitled: Available in Uncut & Edited versions. **Mature Audiences Only.**

NEW ANGEL 3 Subtitled: Available in Uncut & Edited versions. **Mature Audiences Only.**

SOFTWARE SCULPTORS

ZENKI EPISODES 6/7

Subtitled.

STREAMLINE PICTURES

ROBOTECH PERFECT COLLECTION: MACROSS VOL 9

Dubbed

ROBOTECH PERFECT COLLECTION: MOSPEADA VOL 9

Dubbed

ROBOTECH PERFECT COLLECTION: SOUTHERN CROSS VOL 9

Dubbed

U.S. MANGA CORPS

GARAGA Subtitled: When the crew of the starship XeBeC crash land on the planet Garaga, they find a hostile world and evidence that the crash was no accident!

LA BLUE GIRL VOL 3

Subtitled: **Adult Material.**

LEGEND OF LEMNEAR

Subtitled

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

RANMA 1/2: TOUGH COOKIES

Dubbed: Caught between a rock and a hard place, Ranma must either taste Kodachi 'Black Rose' Kuno's cookies, or put his stomach in jeopardy and eat Akane's toxic cooking. Which will it be?

RANMA 1/2 OAV SERIES COLLECTOR'S EDITION VOL 4

Subtitled.

VOYAGER VIDEO

STARBLAZERS COLLECTOR'S EDITION SERIES #2: THE COMET EMPIRE

Dubbed

STARBLAZERS COLLECTOR'S EDITION SERIES 3: THE BOLAR WARS

Dubbed.

ANIME: UK RELEASES

ANIME PROJECTS

URUSEI YATSLURA VOL 8

Subtitled: More of the usual weirdness from Lum and the gang!

EAST2WEST

HEROES SHED NO TEARS

Dubbed: Live action from John Woo.

MANGA ENTERTAINMENT

PROJECT A-KO 5 (A-KO THE VS)

PART 2 BLUE SIDE Dubbed: A huge fleet of starships is heading for Planet Earth (what, again?) Meanwhile, A-Ko is having romance problems. Watch sparks fly when the two collide!

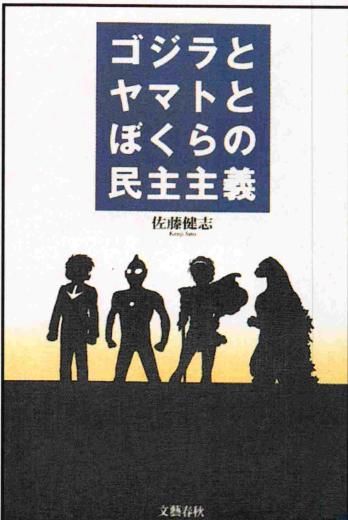
BOUNTY DOG

Dubbed : magical ninja action from Buichi Terasawa.

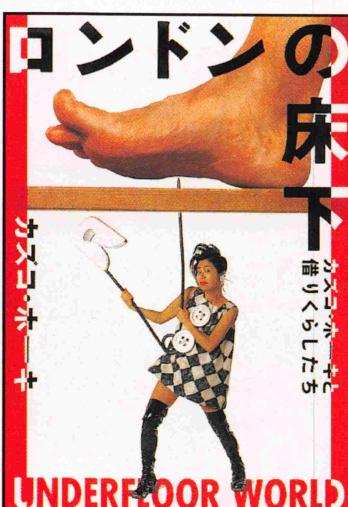
PIONEER LDCE

ARMITAGE III PART 1

Dubbed: An Earth cop posted to Mars has a very unusual partner and a serial robot killer to deal with.



Kenji Sato, *GOJIRA TO YAMATO TO BOKURA NO MINSHUSHUGI*.
Bungeishunju, 1992. ISBN: 4-16-346660-6. ¥1800.



Kazuko Hohki ("and the Borrowers"),
RONDON NO YUKASHITA. Kyuryudo,
1994. ISBN 4-7630-9428-9. ¥1900.

As a rule, I try to stay away from reviewing Japanese books, but I hope you'll indulge me just once, because these two in particular deserve wider recognition. The first came to AFX's intention when we were approached by Michael House, who expressed an interest in writing about it himself. Since he's now tied up with his new job (at Gainax, no less), the task falls to me, with thanks to Michael for telling us

about it. The rather cumbersome title: *Godzilla, Yamato and Our Democracy* belies a cracking good read for anyone interested in Japanese popular culture. Kenji Sato's book contains in-depth essays, originally published in the journal *Shokun*, on all manner of Japanese popular icons. He pays particular attention to Ultraman, Godzilla, Space Battleship Yamato and Hayao Miyazaki, and the presence of such a detailed critical source in Japanese should not go unnoticed by anyone writing on these subjects.

While the overall tone might appear rather dry, with discussions of terms such as nationalism, patriotism and democracy within anime, Sato's book is also very amusing. It is important for any researcher to remember that a lot of his arguments are tongue-in-cheek, and that he evades annoying certain companies by reaching a misleading conclusion, and then 'backing it up' with a contradictory quote from a famous creator. Essentially, instead of being harshly critical, he allows his subjects to dig their own graves, and it takes a considerably detailed knowledge of Japanese to unravel his true conclusions. Nevertheless, his book is invaluable in providing legitimisation from genuine Japanese sources, rather than the speculation that so often passes for criticism amongst English-speaking writers.

Readers of AFX might like to know that Sato is in agreement with many past AFX articles. Like Julia Sertori he is unimpressed with the ecological arguments in *Nausicaa*, but he takes her arguments further by pointing out the sense in the baddies' motives! Like Steve Kyte, he divides GODZILLA movies into three distinct categories, noting a drift towards a 'soft-and-fluffy' monster in the middle period, before the fearsome creature returned with a vengeance in the more recent offerings. My own particular favourite in the book is his essay on the 'Two Yamatos', meaning the STAR BLAZERS craft and the similarly-named submarine in THE SILENT SERVICE, in which he studies the underlying ideologies of the two series. Both are trying to 'save' the world, but their methods are in ideological opposition.

He finishes with an ironic appendix detailing his own '20 Laws of Creative Survival', running through many recurring themes and events in Japanese popular works, and the reasons for their inclusion. Some of them are not particularly unique to Japan, such as 'Love and Sincerity will

transform you into a winner', but his other notes on the roles of women, the function of a love scene, and the dramatic conventions associated with foreigners (especially American characters) should be required reading for anyone interested in recurring themes and 'cultural influences'. Sato's book may be contentious, but it does not consist of guesswork based upon the doubtful provenance of English-language releases. This alone is enough to make it a priceless source.

The second book for review this issue is *Underfloor World* by Kazuko Hohki. If the author's name is familiar, it may be because she has already turned up in AFX as the driving force behind the Frank Chickens pop phenomenon. Hohki has taken her title from *The Borrowers*, the children's book that drove her to come to England in the first place. It also influenced her latest album (*Underfloor World*), and my favourite Frank Chickens song, *Megalomaniacs*. Just like Kenji Sato's book, it was first published in serial form, and has a similarly helpful table of contents that facilitates 'dip-into' reading.

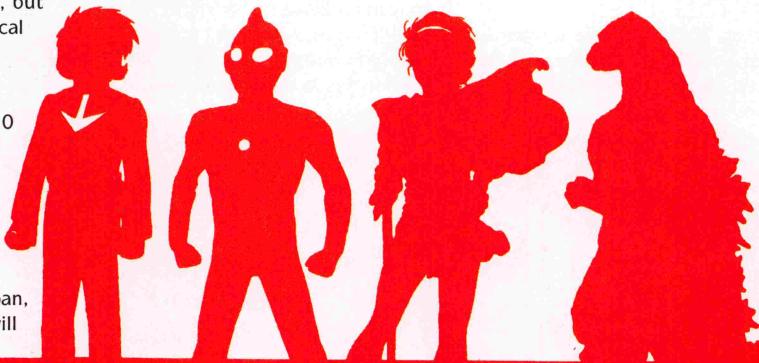
Hohki's own method of organising her material consists of subdividing the contents lists into seven extra categories: Life, Love, Work, Women, Japan, The World and 'The Job' (ie. her personal career). Within these seven areas, she covers an awful lot of ground, and with headings like 'World Peace through Karaoke' and 'The Siberian Grandfather of Punk', you know you're going to be on a magic carpet ride to weirdville.

The happiest readers will already be big fans of the Frank Chickens. You'll get insider gossip on the band's many line-up changes, and backstage goings-on as they perform around the world. Those readers who are not already Chickenised may find those sections tiresome, as it often takes it for granted that you will be interested in the band's activities, or the solo acting career of Hohki herself. After reading a *Tokyo Journal* article about Hohki, I was under the mistaken impression

that her book was a tourist guide to London's less-known sites, whereas it is in fact a very personal emigré diary. The title of her original column in *Kachin* was 'Kazuko's Diary', which should have been a hint, I suppose.

However, as diaries go, this is nothing like the 'today I went shopping' variety. Hohki's notes on English life are all the more interesting because they are a window on the way Japanese people view us, and her autobiographical asides are in keeping with a long-standing tradition in Japanese literature. I think I managed to inadvertently insult the author when I told her I'd be recommending her book to students of Japanese. She claims to have modelled her writing style on that of Yukio Mishima, and she certainly reproduces his deadpan, rather British, narrative structure. However, that's where the resemblance ends.

For a start, Mishima was never this funny. It never ceases to amaze me how the Japanese sense of humour is so close to that of the British. If Douglas Adams ever had the chance to work with such a wonderful book designer, I'm sure that he too would include both an Afterword and an Afterafterword, a DIY secret society membership kit, and a fold-out activity section. Also, Hohki has binned Mishima's pretty but tiresome practice of using *hentaigana*, extremely difficult characters where simpler ones will do. This makes it easier-going for a start, aided still further by the fact that her subject matter is often already familiar to English-speakers. So while you'll be reading a book written by a Japanese for the Japanese, you may find that it's much easier to relate to the material. Can you really resist a deadpan discussion of the British penchant for Irish jokes, or a Japanese view of what it's like to live in East London? I know that I can't, and if you're one of the increasing number of AFX readers who tell us they're learning Japanese, *Underfloor World* would be a rewarding place to begin looking at the Real Thing.



The Real Thing



MANGASCAN JAPAN

JONATHAN CLEMENTS

DARKHAIR CAPTURED

by Ryusuke Mita

Thirty years ago, an unforeseen unpleasantness tore a noodle seller away from his native Japan and transported him to a very strange universe. This is a place where space is blue, where hideous monsters abound, and where everybody has very silly names. Getting home is possible, but for that he needs plenty of money, and so our noodle seller becomes an interplanetary treasure hunter as well.

Captured has grown up in this universe, and thinks of it as home. He has grown up living on his Dad's combined starship/noodle bar, and has even struck up a canoodly relationship with Camel, the simpering waitress who is possessed of an impressive set of humps as well as unfeasibly large hips. Even though the teachers hated him at school, and told the other kids he was fair game for bullying on account of his unworldly black hair, Captured loves the place, and only half-heartedly helps his Dad hunt for treasure.

However, as they pursue the buried loot of Lariat the Space Pirate and Galactic Overlord Kitchensink,

Captured discovers something else. He is the long-awaited Spectremaster, a monster slayer extraordinaire, and has a duty to kick the living daylights out of any creatures that kidnap virgins, destroy worlds or refuse to pay for their noodles.

Darkhair Captured is another creation from Ryusuke Mita, who has achieved godlike status in British fandom as the nutter behind *Dragon Half*. Like *Dragon Half*, this wacky, super-deformed tale pokes light-hearted fun at the anime and manga world, in which a normal Japanese boy is regarded as a freak because he has black hair, and where Mr Average is more likely than not to be the subject of an ancient prophecy, the saviour of the galaxy and the lust-object of legions of well-endowed young ladies.

The real satire, however, comes in the form of Captured's Dad, who has been away from Japan for so long that his memories are less than trustworthy. Dad paints insane pictures of a land where the sun is always rising, where geisha girls wander the streets in nothing but their knickers, and where cheapo noodles are regarded as the highest delicacy. The harder Dad tries to convince Captured of the allure of Japan, the more Captured realises he prefers the fantasy world of his manga universe.

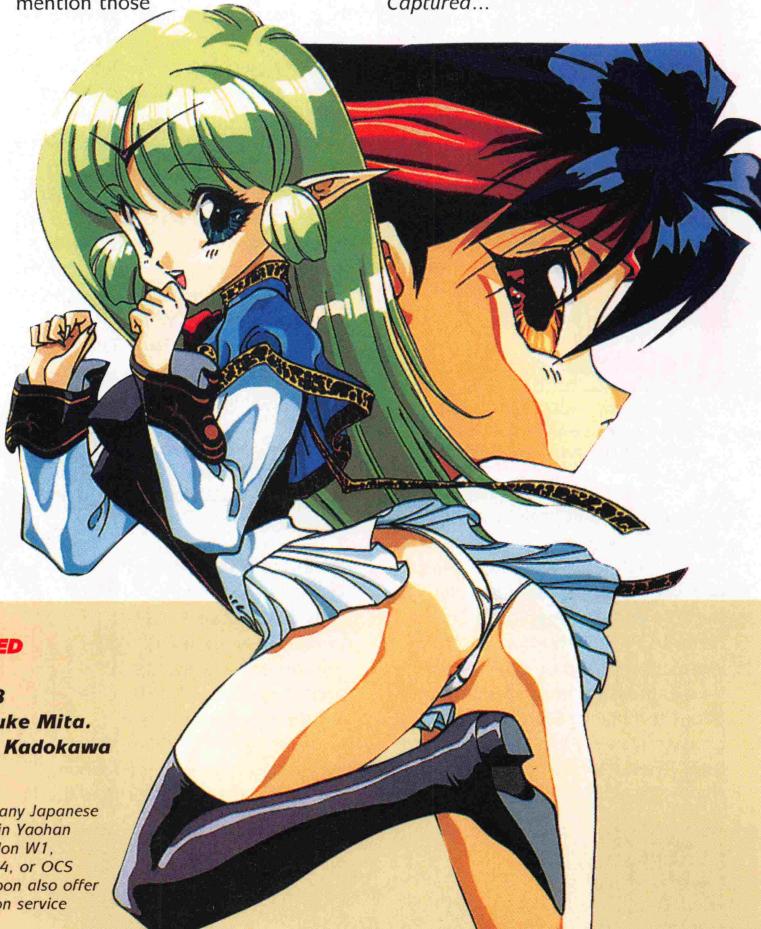


Manga fans and Mita fans will get their usual treat, but the real test of Mita's work is whether or not it can survive outside the otaku market. One possible reason why the release of *Dragon Half* in the UK has taken so long is that companies need to be quite sure it'll sell to more than five hundred hard-core fans. But most of the humour in *Darkhair Captured* would easily survive the journey into a non-otaku audience, because it is so STUPID. It doesn't really matter how ignorant you may be of anime stereotypes, a galactic overlord



called Kitchensink is still funny! Strip away the in-joke elements of *Darkhair Captured*, and you're still left with a comic that's as funny as *Asterix the Gaul*, with plenty of fighting thrown in for free, not to mention those

biggest of big eyes. Funnier than *Ranma*, sexier than *Lum*; it's about time Kadokawa started drumming up some business in the English-language market, and they could do a lot worse than start with *Darkhair Captured*...



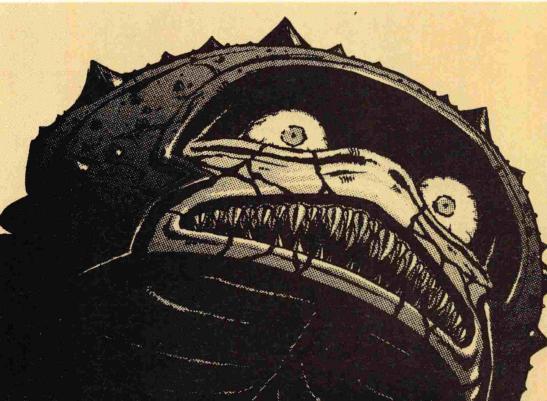
DARKHAIR CAPTURED

Collected Volume 1.

ISBN 4-04-926046-8

Story and Art: Ryusuke Mita.
October 1994, B/W, Kadokawa
Shoten, ¥900

You can order manga from any Japanese bookshop, such as Asahiya in Yaohan Plaza, Japan Centre in London W1, Books Nippon in London EC4, or OCS Books in Ealing. Books Nippon also offer a mail order and subscription service



MANGA SCAN

A look at a couple of the latest translations and manga-inspired titles from the USA, plus Titan editions of two US books; reviews by Helen McCarthy



3 X 3 EYES : CURSE OF THE GESU #1.

Dark Horse Comics. Writer/artist Yuzo Takada, art. Toshifumi Yoshida & Toren Smith. Monthly, 30pp b/w, colour covers. \$2.95 US

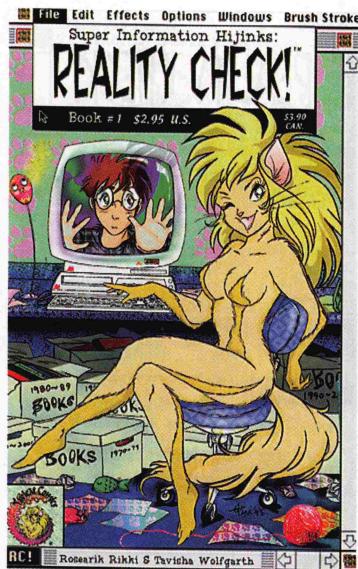
The real thing first, a well-flipped, well-retouched and nicely translated manga from Dark Horse, continuing the manga story of Pai and Yakumo in their quest for Pai's humanity and a return to normal, non-zombie life for Yakumo. The story is somewhat different from the anime but the overall mood of brooding menace and tension, with darkness underlying the calm surface of everyday life, is the same. At the end of the last graphic novel translation from Dark Horse, a mighty battle with the evil Lady Huang and her minions resulted in the vital artefact which could make Pai human vanishing into the void. While attempts to locate it go on, Pai and Yakumo go back to Tokyo to try and resume a normal life. But Pai's immortal 'other self', the Sanjiyan, tells Yakumo he is wasting his time - you can never go back. At first it seems he may just be able to take up his old life and slip back into his group of friends; then they see him survive a horrific accident and realise he

wasn't joking about being 'Superzombie' ...

One of the charms of Takada's art is the way he selects and simplifies background and detail to suit the panel. The first frame of the story is a stunning greyscale pic of the Hong Kong waterfront, its misty picture-postcard nostalgia conveying a sense of leaving friends, starting a journey, nostalgia and departure all at once. Over the page, the airport bustle and crowds fade to ciphers and only Pai and Yakumo, waving goodbye, stand out. Then street shots of Tokyo and a lovely interior of Yakumo's apartment convey a sense of normality and security. His choice of viewpoint for each scene is also spot on, as in the final scenes, where we switch from Yakumo's mangled body to the horrified onlookers as they see him re-assembled from chaos before their eyes. Thirty pages take us from relief as normality reasserts itself back to horror with never a dull moment along the way. I'm very impressed by this book. Don't miss it.

SUPER INFORMATION HIJINKS: REALITY CHECK! #1

Tavcat Comics. Writer: Rosearik Rikki. Artist: Tavisha Wolfgarth. Bimonthly, 24pp b/w, colour covers, \$2.95 US



This is a really sweet book. And I mean that quite seriously. There's nothing nasty, vicious, violent or immoral in it; it's a gentle, nostalgic look back at the authors' own teen years, set in L.A. of 2012 but likely to be familiar to teens and twentysomethings all over the USA; and it's a reflection of everyone's need for a very special friend. For teen hero Collin, stuck with a family who don't even notice him, let alone understand him, and an awful feeling that life is happening Out There Somewhere but he may never get to it, that's his cat Catreece, the one member of the household who always listens to him, shows him

uncloying affection and is content to live and let live. Then Collin gets an advanced Virtual Reality game system and finds that there's more to his family and Catreece than he ever dreamed...

The artwork is lovely, done in very attractive greyscales with drawing that is both charming and convincing. There's a good balance of highly detailed backgrounds and much simpler tonal settings that focus on the action, giving the sense of a highly detailed, realised world but not overpowering the story and characters with unnecessary fuss. It's not a show-offish, look-at-me-I-can-use ziptone kind of work at all. The Japanese influence is evident, but instead of slavishly imitating 'manga style' Tavisha Wolfgarth has absorbed elements of it and made them part of her own way of working. There are all kinds of little visual gags and comments that are great fun to discover and tell us more about the characters. The story isn't spectacular (or spectacularly original) but it's full of gentle humour and nicely observed situations, and the writing is kept in balance with the pictures, letting them do most of the work...

In a sad commentary on the direction some anthropomorphic comics have taken in recent years, the authors felt it necessary to tell us that they won't 'ever create some randy encounter between Collin and Catreece'. Well, guys, anyone who's read your book will know that's not what it's about. But if you want a gentle, goodnatured comic that will make you smile and maybe bring back a few memories, this is it. Future episodes promise to be very enjoyable.

CYBER CITY OEDO 808, Part One, 1 & 2.

CPM Comics. Artist Tim Eldred. 24pp colour + colour covers. \$2.95 US

These, and Parts Two and Three, are adaptations of the anime released in the USA by US Manga Corps and in the UK by Manga Video. They follow the stories closely so if you've seen the anime there are no surprises, and the art is so closely based on the originals that it's like reading a highly developed fullcolour storyboard. Eldred's backgrounds are detailed and assured, the characters not quite line-for-line as in the anime, but near enough. He's a good draughtsman and has done an honest, professional job, though sadly his two major strengths - his quirky humour and highly individual faces - are not required here. Not having seen the USMC subtitled tapes I don't know how closely this version shadows the script, but there is certainly a





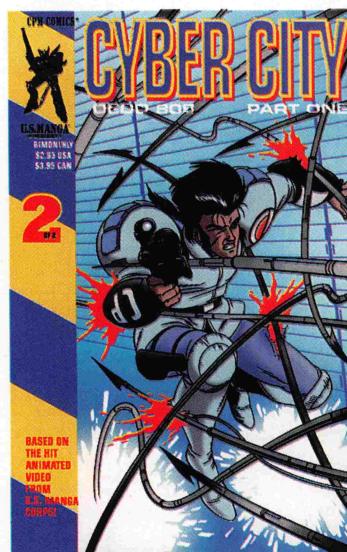
the bath. And unlike a TV show, a comic doesn't dictate the pace to you. If you want to spend time going over it slowly, linger over one panel or page, you can. That's all I can come up with by way of reasons. So here's a clean, well-executed version of a fastmoving video series to enjoy at your own pace, wherever you want to take it. Eldred and his Studio Go! colleagues have done a good job of rendering the anime. I'd still rather have it on video, but you may think differently. It would be interesting to see how Eldred handled the chance to do an original CYBER CITY OEDO 808 story, and I have a feeling that fans of the show would prefer it.

GALL FORCE : ETERNAL STORY
CPM Comics. Writer/Artist : Bruce Lewis. Four-part mini-series. 24pp colour + colour covers. \$2.95 US.

Another comic version of a successful anime, this time based on the first of the GALL FORCE saga, released by USMC in the USA but still awaiting a UK launch. Lewis doesn't render Sonoda's chara designs as cute as the master himself, but who could? To be fair to

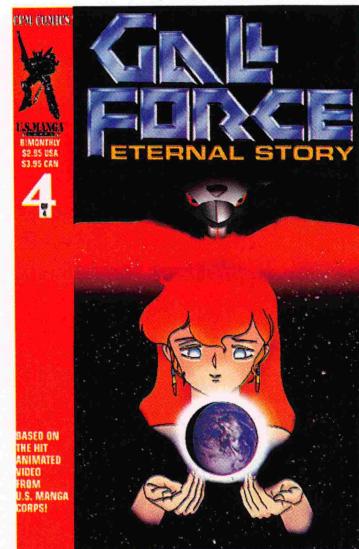
Lewis, he does a reasonable job, never trying to kid us he's Sonoda and thus allowing his own strengths and limitations to come through. He's not such a good anatomy draughtsman as Studio Go! colleague Tim Eldred and his line work is less assured, but he deals well with the major problem - lots of panels and lots of dialogue, both needed to convey the story, not easy to fit into the page count. Interestingly, he way he's handled the colouring gives a completely different 'feel' to the visuals - much softer and gentler than the anime versions, and his backgrounds, much less detailed than those in the anime, contribute to this softer effect. The main benefit of this is that, even though the story is the same, the comic version has enough of a difference to be interesting in its own right.

The heroic tragedy of the crew of the STARLEAF is one of the classics of anime, to the extent that it has been parodied in SD mode (as TEN LITTLE GALL FORCE and a component of SCRAMBLE WARS) and been the subject of much fan art, writing and dojinshi work. The unwitting agents of a plan by their own people and their historic en-



difference from the UK dub script - the closest this gets to profanity is 'hell!' and 'screw it!' (referring to a robot sputtering data) and Benten's language in particular is more refined and intelligent. The art, scripting and colouring are competent and enjoyable but not in any way outstanding in their own right; they follow their original faithfully.

So what, you might ask, is the point of doing the comic at all? It's a fair question about any video or movie adaptation; I asked it myself about the 'rewritten' version of LITTLE WOMEN put out to accompany the recent Hollywood film and was told that modern American teenagers find Louisa May Alcott's language and storytelling too old-fashioned and slow-paced to hold their attention. It's unlikely that that could be said of either this comic or the video on which it's based; both have plenty of action and snappy editing. I suppose it must be that a comic is more of a personal experience. You can enjoy it anytime you want - no need for a video or TV, you just slip it out of your bag or pocket. You can take it on the train, escape into it on a crowded bus, even read it in



mies to create a new race by uniting the genetic material of both, they end up sacrificing themselves to save the new life and ensure that the plan can go ahead. Lewis's writing departs quite a way from the actual dialogue, adding asides and scraps of character-building material, though it doesn't change the storyline. Again, this makes the book sufficiently different from the video to throw another light on the story. I couldn't honestly say this is a must-buy for every anime fan - those who love Sonoda's chara designs might be disappointed by these versions of the girls - but if you find the GALL FORCE universe interesting then you should definitely take a look at this view of it. Again, original 'side stories' set in the universe would be an interesting experiment, and one that CPM should perhaps discuss with their Japanese licensors.



BRUCE LEE
Titan Books. Writer Mike Baron, artist Val Mayerik, inks Meyerik & James Sherman. Graphic novel, 160pp colour, colour covers. £6.99

This highly fictionalised version of the early career of the martial arts master is interesting in that it renders his work, so conspicuously un-Hollywood, in purely Hollywood terms. The characters, Bruce included, are stereotypes, though some are so closely based on wellknown personalities that the careful legal disclaimer on the flyleaf was obviously necessary. The artwork is pure American comic and the stories could be (and perhaps were or will be) outlines for episodes of a series 'based on the life of'.

It collects together parts 1-6 of the Malibu Comics BRUCE LEE series in a same-size perfect-bound format. The art and writing are not going to set either the comics or martial arts world alight, but it's an entertaining read for an odd afternoon, and if you know a young martial arts freak

who could absorb the no-drugs, no-showing-off, no-unnecessary-violence moral that's constantly pumping under the action they might appreciate a copy. The nearest it gets to an anime connection is lettering by Tim Eldred, and it doesn't tell you much about Asian film, but you'll find out a lot about how America mythologises Hollywood.

MORTAL KOMBAT: BLOOD & THUNDER

Titan Books. Writer Charles Marshall, artists Patrick Rolo & Kiki Chanozomone. Graphic novel. 180 pp colour, colour covers. £7.99

Another collection of a Malibu comic release, parts 1-6 of the BLOOD & THUNDER series plus the TOURNAMENT EDITION. Two pencillers, no less than seven inkers and four letterers (including Studio Proteus' Tomoko Saito) have worked on this and the result is a homogenous American-superhero artstyle, where all the women have highly developed breasts and thighs and a fondness for designer aerobic gear, and all the men are the most appalling poseurs. Since MORTAL KOMBAT is an American-designed, American-owned game this is entirely appro-

priate, but anyone expecting a Japanese influence should be warned that there isn't one. The closest thing to an Asian inspiration is the long tradition of martial-arts tournament movies, and there are many scenes in this book reminiscent of those in Titan's other new UK release, BRUCE LEE.

The script gives these superhero/villain clones appropriate speeches, like "I am your worst nightmare personified" and "As a reward for your insolence I shall freeze your very soul". The console game probably isn't the ideal format for subtle character development and plot progression, and the succession of continuous ongoing conflicts between a mix'n'match cast of characters doesn't help with that side of things. So you're not going to buy this book for subtle characterisation, innovative writing or experimental art style. If you enjoy MORTAL KOMBAT, though, this is about as good a rendition of it in comic form as you can get, and it's also a fair taster of the game itself at a much lower cost than the cart.



CONTEST CORNER

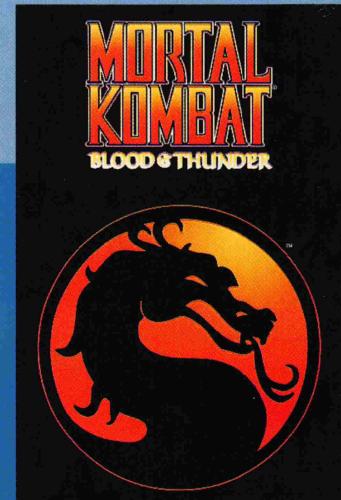
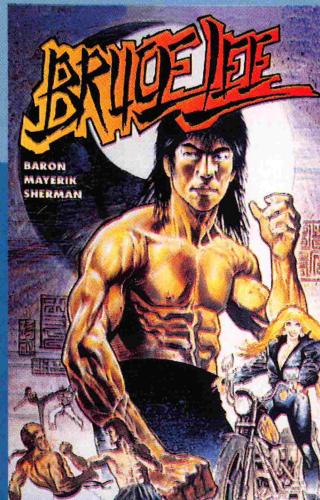
WIN ARMITAGE III

You can win Pioneer's newest release! ARMITAGE III can be yours if you enter this easy competition, because Pioneer have given us five copies for you lucky readers. Just answer one simple question and send the reply on a postcard/envelope with your name and address to ANIME FX, TERROR IN LEATHER, 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF, UK, by 1st February 1996.

What's the question? Easy-peasy! Just tell us what city on Mars Ross Sylibus lands at at the beginning of his adventures. All the cards with right answers will go into the draw and the first five out of the hat each win a copy of the video!

WIN TITAN'S NEW MARTIAL ARTS GRAPHIC NOVELS!

By courtesy of Titan Books, we have five copies each of MORTAL KOMBAT and BRUCE LEE to give away to the first ten readers whose names come out of the hat on 1st February 1996. Send your name and address and a note of which book you'd prefer, on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope, to ANIME FX, KOMBAT KONTEST, 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF, UK.





VIDEO SCAN

U.K. RELEASES

PROJECT A-KO 5: BATTLE 1 - GREY SIDE

Manga Video, MANV 1116, 50 mins approx, English Dubbed, Cert PG, PAL

I'm not at all sure about the reasoning behind this OAV - maybe there were complicated legal battles over the A-Ko characters, or maybe the creators just got bored with high-school and decided to play around for a bit. I could care less: suffice to say that Grey Side flies in the face of everything shown in the previous four OAVs. The surprise is that it does it rather well...

In a distant, and rather Dirty Pair-esque future, a luxury spaceliner is boarded by a pair of pirates - Grush has the big guns and the big muscles, while Liza has... well, trouble standing upright. Together they kidnap young C-Ko, the ten-year-old daughter of a wealthy industrialist, and head for a rendezvous with their mysterious boss, Gail. Meanwhile, A-Ko and B-Ko are making a meagre living as monster hunters on a planet that consists mainly of green desert. C-Ko drops by as Grush's ship breaks up on re-entry, and proceeds to eat the pair out of house and home before Liza shows up to get her back.

After that it's a fight, a chase, and another fight, plus Gail's nefarious plans to raise some kind of demonic entity using C-Ko as a vessel. There isn't really any plot to speak of, but the whole OAV is great good fun; fast-moving, nicely voiced, and carting a Santa-sized sackload of jokes both visual and verbal. The fact that it doesn't really refer to its predecessors at all means that Grey Side works well as a stand-alone show - better, in fact, than some of the 'official' A-Ko stories. One in the eye for purists, which can only be a good thing.

P.J. Evans

ZERAM

Manga Video Live, MANL 1005 87 mins approx. English Dubbed, Cert 18, PAL

Zeram is an intelligent biohazard, a living weapons construct with an array of lethal powers. After casually (and messily) deleting an entire corridor-full of soldiers before the opening titles, he decides to head for Earth, and hurtles like a meteor towards suburban Japan.

Luckily for us, his nemesis is already installed - a dimension-hopping bounty hunter called Iria has Zeram in her sights, and is planning to send him ingeniously off-course. She has her sentient computer construct an artificial reality in which to trap the creature; a perfect, but uninhabited replica of the town, seeded with traps and weapons. Unfortunately, two bumbling power-company technicians are dragged into the construct with her, and Iria realises that she not only has to trap Zeram, but rescue these fools at the same time: if they get killed she could actually lose money...

Zeram is very much a curate's egg of a film. Watching it is like going out with a paranoid schizophrenic - just when you think you might be enjoying yourself, it turns around and slaps you around the face for no good reason. For example, the stop-motion/animatronic rebirths of Zeram look great: well done and entertainingly icky. For most of the film, however, he wanders about looking like a constipated mushroom. Equally, all the work that has gone into the pyrotechnics and weapons design in the show seems wasted when Zeram starts giving birth to wittering rubber refugees from an episode of Power Rangers. And most annoying of all is the way that any character, given even the simplest instruction ('shoot that thing!' 'Turn the switch!' 'Look over there!') stands around debating for a good thirty seconds before actually doing anything.

There are plenty of monsters, some nice weapons tech and a few good ideas in Zeram. With a lot of judicious cutting, this film might have been very good indeed - as it stands, it veers drunkenly between the passable and the irritating.

P.J. Evans

ARMITAGE III

Pioneer, P10 10015, 50 mins approx, English dubbed, cert 15, PAL

The search for the successor to AKIRA may not be over, but

ARMITAGE III is likely to be closer in line than the much-vaunted and hauntingly beautiful GHOST IN THE SHELL. Its world looks like Otomo's Neo-Tokyo (and Scott's *Blade Runner*), it moves fast, it's packed with visual and dramatic incident, and, in contrast to GHOST'S cool, cerebral superbeings, its characters are seething with emotions and inadequacies. However, the roots of the story go back far further in time and distance than Otomo's masterpiece; they belong to the long tradition of science fiction which, ever since *Frankenstein*, has allowed creatures as well as their creators to demand "What am I? And why?" The theme may not be new but it still has visceral power. When Armitage is forced to publicly acknowledge the fact that, despite her memories, her family, her feelings, she is a highly sophisticated construct (and like her 'sisters' may be burned in the streets for it) her reaction is intensely human - horror, fear and despair drive her, first to attempt escape, then to find the solution to the riddle of herself and those like her. The Roy Batty of this story, Danclaude, is a psychotic with an anti-robot fixation, but what's his true motive? I'd lay odds there's more than a trace of the genetic engineering lab in his family tree ... This first episode is only laying the foundations of the story and it promises more than it has time to deliver; we get glimpses of the terraformed planet and its fragile new society, learn a little about the major characters and their background, see several gruesome murders (in closeup on primetime TV - the BBFC will doubtless give this one some serious thought, and the 15 certificate postulated by Pioneer may be a mite optimistic!) and that's about it. Visually we have fun - otaku can play spot-the-reference to their heart's content - and the music is pacy and apt. Even with a higher pricetag (it's just £6.99) this would be a good-value first episode, but I have a feeling the best is yet to come.

Rory Donnelly

LONG MAO

Asia Video, 86 minutes, dubbed in Cantonese, PAL

Mei and her sister Siji have moved with their Dad to Dragon-Cat Mountain while their mother remains critically ill in hospital. As the time passes, the girls make friends with the legendary 'Dragon-Cats' that live all around. Only certain lucky children can see them, but they are warm, fluffy and friendly, and repay any kindness tenfold. It all pays off for Mei when Siji goes missing, and she asks her supernatural friends to find her. If this sounds familiar, it should. With

a bare minimum of alterations, Asia Video have done a lovely dub of *TOTORO*. One of the central elements of the Miyazaki magic is that it appeals across cultural boundaries, and I'm sure Cantonese children will adopt this pastoral fairy tale as their own, just like lucky Japanese and American children before them. The uncredited staff and voice actors are faultless in their chosen market, and even tear a leaf out of Streamline's book, with a bilingual Catbus that announces destinations to help you understand the final reel. If you're one of our many Cantonese-speaking readers, or just an English fan who'd rather watch a Hong Kong PAL video than buy an NTSC one to see the American version, then £20 and a trip to your nearest Chinatown is all you need. You can even learn the Totoro song in Cantonese! All together now...

Jonathan Clements

EUROPEAN RELEASES

ANGE DES TENEBRES (ANGEL OF DARKNESS)

EVA, EV-955103, Dubbed in French, PAL or SECAM, 40 mins approx

... or 'Tentacles At The Chalet School', as I mentally tagged this tiresome bit of soft porn about ten minutes into it. The story goes something like this (though take it from me, you won't be watching this for the story!): two 'close friends' at a girls' boarding school where lesbian affairs seem to be the norm are drawn into a web of demonic ritual being enacted under chapel by the headmistress and one of the male teachers, who are using the sexual energies of young girls to create a demonic superbeing. The feisty, tomboyish one runs into some teeny trolls with cannibalistic tendencies as well as a very cute (though sadly minuscule) boy fairy, who ask for her help in fighting the evil; meanwhile her cute little friend and her big sister, a senior pupil at the same school, have been captured, trussed up in the usual S & M style and tortured by the evil teachers and other brainwashed pupils. Good triumphs in the end, of course, though it will also come as no surprise to see the no doubt sequel-conscious production team dropping hopeful hints about the headmistress' continuing career in higher education just before the credits roll. This is a tedious and wholly unerotic waste of time and space, predictable and puerile from beginning to end except for the

cannibalistic trolls - and even they turned out to be just misunderstood. There are lots of good French subtitled tapes on the market, but this isn't one of them.

Rory Donnelly

U.S.A. RELEASES

CYBERNETICS GUARDIAN

US Manga Corps, USMC1330, English subtitled, NTSC, 45 mins

Koichi Ohata's directorial debut plays more like the pilot for a new TV series than a stand-alone OAV. Right from the start, it's obvious that there is far more story here than can be covered in 45 minutes. A secret society devoted to the worship of ancient gods is plotting to 'cleanse' (read: destroy) the world of the future, in particular the city of Cyberwood, playing a long game by implanting 'seeds of hatred' into young boys and waiting for them to mature to the stage where they can be transformed into superbeings who can call up cybernetic 'Devil Armors' for battle; politicians are arguing about the best way to deal with the crime-ridden urban slum known as Cancer; scientists are developing new technologies and arguing about the best

way to apply them. The homages to Ohata's numerous cinematic influences which sneak in everywhere - look for the King Kong shot! - are capped by a TERMINATOR-ish ending, with the two central characters driving off into an unknown future, but plotstrands started in this episode suggest a massive ongoing saga. The Cyberwood cop who helps heroine Leyla, the crazed scientist who transforms himself into one of his own superweapons to wipe out the 'scum' of Cancer (trivia-spotters: this is the first appearance of the GENOCYBER concept!), the secret worshippers of Doldo and the 'other gods' they're trying to revive provide plenty of mileage for a series. So does this first OAV have enough to stand alone? Well, there's plenty of action, lots of explosions, heavy armour and cyberstuff; plus there's the love triangle of Leyla, crazed scientist Adler and slum-kid-made-good John Stalker. The animation is good for a 1989 OAV - don't expect AKIRA, but you won't be too disappointed. The music mix is confusing, with some of the soundtrack songs mixed so far back you wonder if the director didn't like them, and only the final song, which is in English, subtitled. It's enjoyable as an action-adventure, but it's still frustrating to know that we'll never find out about the other gods, or if crazy Adler survived to carry on his vendetta. Come on, Mr. Ohata, where's the rest of the series?

Jo Carter



Original Japanese dialogue with English subtitles

NE-CHAN'S FAVOURITE THIS MONTH IS: ARMITAGE III



Dear ANIME FX,
Konnichiwa! First of all a big THANK YOU and pats on the back to all the crew who brought us.

ReConTanimeTed 95. I watched loads of great anime, made lots of new friends and had a thoroughly good weekend. Being relatively new to this 'aneem' lark, it was only my second con (first being last year's) and the first time I exhibited artwork. I certainly didn't expect to win anything! (Ed: Simon won Best In Show for his original and enjoyable artwork.) All other fan artists are now duly warned that I don't plan on giving up that title in a hurry!

Now on to a few other points. First the Masquerade, excellent number and quality of entries, the super-deformed Lum will stick in my memory forever. It might be a good idea for the tech crew, gophers, anyone with a video camera really, to film the event and feed pictures direct to the main screen. People at the back of the hall only saw the weirdos, I mean contestants, when they made their entrance, and had to miss out on the presentation upfront. This also applies to the Politically Incorrect T-Shirt. Competition; most of the entries suffered because they couldn't be seen properly. (Maybe this is a good thing?) It would only require a very long cable to connect the camera to the video equipment to remedy this.

A point raised at the gripe session was Dave Ross's plea (or threat - he was holding a very big gun!) to the attendees for more models in the art room. I've built a few anime kits in the eighteen months I've been an otaku but

ANIMAIL is YOUR forum for your views, questions or comments on the anime and manga scene. Send your letters to ANIMAIL, AFX, 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF, UK.
If you'd like a personal reply please enclose a self-addressed envelope with UK postage, or two International Reply Coupons for overseas postage. Please note that our Post Office will not accept foreign stamps for postage of replies from the UK.

This point was illustrated only too well by Dave himself - when I met him he was supergluing part of his excellent Nausicaa kit back together!

Staying with models, you haven't had any model club articles in your hallowed pages for quite some time. Is this due to lack of contributions or priority given to other articles?

Finally a plea to modellers who also build car kits - or know someone who does! I am currently building a 1/24 scale vinyl kit of the Type X-0 Ingram from PATLABOR. I am planning to make the driver's hatch open and seat lower. I desperately need a 1/24 scale figure to take dimensions from before I can begin work on this area. PLEASE HELP! MY full address is printed below.

That's enough of my inane drivel for now. I've already signed up for next year's event so see you there!

SIMON SUNG,
24 Beech Grove, Dunfermline, Fife, KY11 5AH, Scotland.

HELEN: *I know a professional modeller who transports big sf models round conventions and he would wholeheartedly agree with you that they*

*can be b****s to move. He gets big cardboard boxes, pads them with foam and bubblewrap, and puts them in the*

back of a car or van; I suppose you could take one or two smaller figures boxed in a suitcase but it's a hassle by public transport. If anyone's driving down from Scotland next year, maybe you could help Simon or other Scots modelmakers out? And we haven't forgotten our model club pages, but the contributions slated for future issues are still in progress'.

Dear Helen,
It seems more and more people are joining the otaku craze, this year's ReCon was bursting with newcomers. I would like to say that the costumes in this year's costume parade were excellent, especially 'Sailor Jupiter', who I doubt will be beaten by a better costume. I would also like to thank all committee members for a wonderful convention, and all those who took an interest in the fan dubbing workshop, which I hope will be repeated next year.

Many thanks to the congoers, and to you for having a great mag.
HARLEY 'RYOMA' PALMER,
Didcot, Oxon, UK.

HELEN: *ReCon was a fun weekend, as these letters show - if you missed out in 95, try and come along for the 1996 convention!*

Dear Helen,
By way of an addendum to your review of DOMU in AFX 7, I'd just like to point out that the translation used in the Mandarin graphic novel is not the Dana Lewis/Toren Smith translation used in the Dark Horse three-volume version. Take note, fans (or otherwise) of Studio Proteus translations.

It is great that an English translation (or two) is available at last. For my money, DOMU is a superior read to AKIRA. The brutal pace of the storytelling, when confined within the narrow limits of the story's locale, produces an intensity that lingers in the mind for days.

Regards,
SIMON JOWETT, London, UK

HELEN: *I agree with you, Simon (though until your letter I thought I was the only person in the universe who*

prefers DOMU to AKIRA!), and thanks for making the translation difference clear. I like to see more than one translated version of anything because it helps us to understand what a delicate job translation is and how the translator influences our perception of the material.

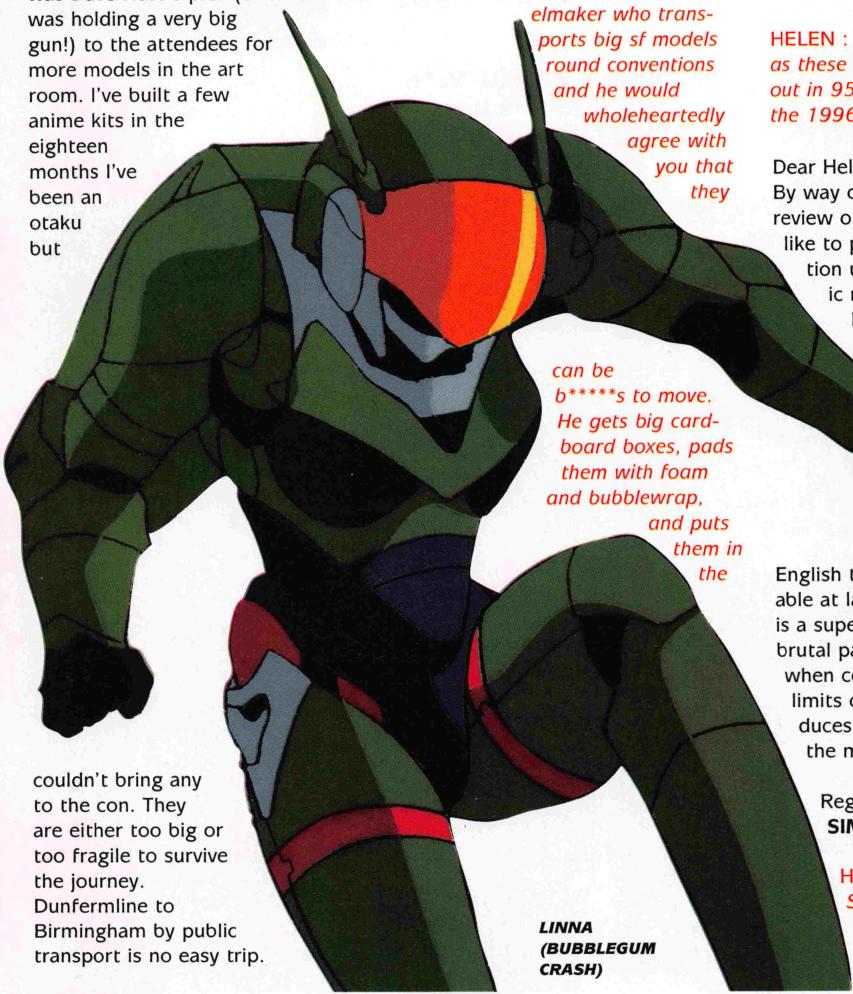
Dear AFX,
I got your address from my friend and he says you know how to order Japanese anime magazines. Where can I get them and how much do they cost? PLEASE!!!

ALEXANDER HYLANDER,
Trollhattan, Sweden.

HELEN: *I don't know of any Swedish shops that stock them, but you can mail-order ANIME V, NEW-TYPE, ANIMAGE and the rest from BOOKS NIPPON, 64-66 St. Paul's Churchyard, London EC4, UK. If you write to them, they will be able to tell you the cost including postage. Or why not see if you can find a Japanese penfriend to exchange anime magazines with?*

Dear Helen,
Ooh, jag har oppnat en burk av maskor, har jaginte?! * (N.B. : If this is your language, dear reader, go back to the Pen Pal page in issue 9!) Seems I'm not the only one who's narked about the RANMA 1/2 anime - or the distinct lack of! Manga Mania looks like it's taking notes from sister mag, *The X-Files*, - "Deny everything!" (BBC2, 2 October's episode) - and us lot, the RANMA 1/2 Fan Club (Unofficial) continue to lose out. You can say I'm turning all Agent Mulder-ish, if you like, but "The Truth Is Out There!" I don't know who, but someone's been telling porkies, and I'm inclined to believe it's not you, Tony Mott (*Super Play* 30 - even if he doesn't like Roxette!) or MV's Laurence Guinness. What I do know is that Rumiko Takahashi's waterlogged wonder has been treated with this disrespect for way too long. It's clear that RANMA will sell here, clear enough for even Mousse to see. If what *Manga Mania* says is true, and MV doesn't have the UK licence, why has nobody else secured it? Every RANMA tape is a potential #1 seller in the UK.

Besides this, a series of tapes such as the 30 that'll be available in America by 1996 will shatter the illusion most of the popular media (*The Sun* et al) suffer from: that all "manga cartoons" ("...", as they say) deal with "sex, violence, intergalactic monsters and superheroes" (*Daily Mirror*, this very mornin', 19 October) and that anime, a word papers have a LOT of trouble with, is all AKIRA, FIST OF THE NORTH STAR, UROTSUKIDOJI, GUY and so on. BECAUSE IT AIN'T! It's RANMA, Lum, GODDESS!, SLOW STEP, MAISON IKKOKU, TENCHI MUYO!, KO CENTURY BEAST WARRIORS and EL



couldn't bring any to the con. They are either too big or too fragile to survive the journey. Dunfermline to Birmingham by public transport is no easy trip.

HAZARD & co. as well. The sooner this is realised, the better. For all of us. Who's with me?

Now I'm down off me soap-box, on to other things Steve Cross of Trimdon Grange: try HYSTERIA in Hartlepool; CITY COMICS, Sunderland; FORBIDDEN PLANET, Newcastle (my favourite); and I've heard about THE IMAGINATION STATION, Middlesbrough. They're the shops I know about up 'ere. Jonathan Edwards (great world record mate!) : URUSEI YATSURA's first two volumes have been GNised : The Perfect Collection (Part One) and The Return of Lum (The 12 parts from *Anmerica*). The third series should be collected into a GN when the current series, the fourth, is almost finished. Hope I've helped but I've got first dibs on Lum, OK? Finally, a big 'yowza' to Randy Navarro of Jacksonville, FL - with a name like that he's got to be a RED DWARF fan! Watch series 5's episode 'Holoship' and all will become clear.

Talk to you later - tack sa mycket!**
Yours dunked in cold water (squeee!)
PHIL HALLIWELL,
Shotton Colliery, Co. Durham, UK

SWEDISH TRANSLATIONS : * Ooh, I have opened a can of worms, haven't I?
** Thanks very much!

HELEN : *The mystery of ownership of British rights to RANMA 1/2 will persist till the Mystery Company that owns them comes forward. All I am at liberty to say at this time is, think computer games, and DON'T think British companies... but I am also informed that negotiations are underway to try and resolve the RANMA-shortage in the UK. Until then, brush up your French with the KAZE OAV releases on PAL, or mail order from Australia.*

Dear ANIME FX,
Do you know if PIONEER LDC has any plans to release a TENCHI soundtrack in this country, and do they have a certain release date for TENCHI volume 5? Until the next time, keep up the good work!

ALAN SENIOR,
Dean Park, Renfrew, Scotland.

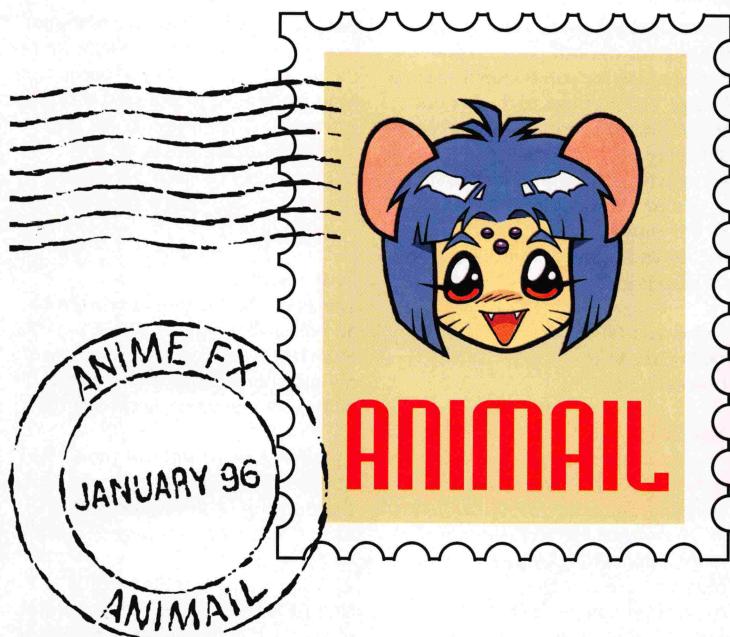
HELEN : *Pioneer have not yet announced any plans for CD soundtrack releases here in the UK - but let them know you're interested and I'm sure they will consider it! As for company's release plans, we always announce them as soon as possible, so you'll see future PIONEER releases listed in the magazine. If you want to get any information in advance of that, I'm afraid you have to write direct to the company.*

Dear Helen,
Bonjour! I'm having ANIME FX sent

out to me and was glad to hear NAUSICAA was on the big screen for you to experience. Yesterday I had the privilege of seeing PORCO ROSSO on the big screen - it was a delight. My girlfriend (new to the anime game) and I had the pleasure of having a whole arty theatre to ourselves as we saw the Crimson Pig; being alone in a 2000 seater theatre watching Miyazaki on a huge screen was rather magical. Of course the fact that I'm useless at French didn't help, but then it didn't hinder either.

One thing I've enjoyed in France has been all the anime, whether kick-ass DRAGONBALL Z, SAILOR MOON or SAINT SEIYA on TV or buying some of the cheapish manga. It strikes me how much more expensive their videos are, \$20-£25, but there are so many imports from Japan! I only wish it were so back home. Another thing that has struck me is how much the French enjoy this erotic lark, with vids such as DRAGON PINK, SHIN ANGEL and DR. FEEL-GOOD.

I have to say I'm disappointed with the BBFC's excision of 2 minutes of KEKKO KAMEN. How you could call this 'minor cuts' is beyond me. It's a bloody massacre. I have to say that I cannot agree with your reviewing of titles before they pass the BBFC. I believe you did this with KEKKO KAMEN. Basically you are commenting on a different version than that which is finally available and as a lot of us rely on your views before buying titles it's a bit of a disappointment to find that the version we have is completely different to what you recommended. 2 minutes of cuts, even one or two small cuts, changes the dimensions of a film, and it can't be right to review and recommend a product significantly dissimilar to what we eventually get. You are probably sent the



videos but you could surely advise the companies that you won't review copies before the BBFC have their few hundred quids' worth. Surely KEKKO KAMEN was an obvious candidate for the castration treatment.

Anyway that is the only quibble I have with what has turned out to be an increasingly authoritative mag. So long,

IAN McEWAN,
temporarily resident in Loulay, France.

P.S. : Can you print a contact address for the English language Belgian fanzine you mentioned?

HELEN : *Two minutes, spread out over a number of scenes as a second or two here and there, isn't actually so much. Both ADVENTURE DUO and UROTSUKIDOJI 3 took far more substantial cuts than that, and*

the main reason why the long-awaited UROTSUKIDOJI 4 has not been licensed for UK release as we go to press, apart from some problems with the actual mechanics of the licensing, is that the 45-minute first episode would probably be reduced by around 20 minutes - the opening sequence alone is a prolonged and particularly nasty rape. KEKKO KAMEN's story was not altered by the cuts and no scenes were entirely removed, so I don't consider that I was reviewing a "different version" than the one released. All the sight gags, slapstick bits and weird goings-on are still in place. All the humour for which I love this title is still there. Do a few two-second shots of nipples or naked bodies really make that much difference? Not to me they don't; it's still a terrific comedy. In any event, if reviews are going to appear in time to be any use, it's sometimes impossible for video companies to wait until the BBFC-approved version becomes available before sending out time-coded copies to reviewers. I'm delighted to have the chance to reprint the address for that excellent fanzine J.A.M.M. : c/o Emmanuel Van Melkebeke, Code XYZ, Parkplein 5, Gent B-9000, Belgium.

Dear ANIME FX,
I'm just writing to ask a few questions and to tell you that I love your magazine, I've bought every one of the new series of ANIME UK (now FX). I started buying anime videos about a year and a half ago and now I have over 60 videos. One of my favourites is the UROTSUKIDOJI series and I want to know if there is a 4th part, because it can't end with everyone walking to Osaka to see the Chojin. If you know anything about it please write to me because I'd love to have it.

One of the best anime OAVs is the MACROSS PLUS series on Manga



Video. I've got parts 1-3 and I'm waiting for the 4th part to come out because for some stupid reason Manga Video brings each part out every 2 or 3 months, which is really annoying because I really want to know what happens. I just heard that they made a *MACROSS PLUS* movie with 20 minutes extra plus all the OAVs together, will this movie come out in England or Europe?

Thank you OTAKUS!

TOM BULWER,
Brussels, Belgium.

HELEN : *In both cases, the delays in release of these titles are outside the control of the UK distribution companies. Yes, as you'll have read in my reply to Ian McEwan above, there is an *UROTSUKIDOJI* 4, but the Japanese producers are asking for a huge amount of money for it - largely because the first three releases were so successful in the West. In Europe and the USA, where you can release uncut videos, this might not be a problem; but any UK release would be very severely censored because much of *UROTSUKIDOJI* 4 would be regarded as very unsuitable for general release. Now, the Japanese don't charge less for rights because a title will be censored over here, so the UK distributors would be paying a very high price for 45-minute episodes which would be maybe 25 minutes long by the time they were censored. Could they recoup their investment? Such things have to be considered very carefully. In the case of *MACROSS PLUS* PART 4, there were some licensing difficulties which meant that Manga Video couldn't just go ahead and release it straight after the first 3 episodes. The rights of the Japanese film-makers have to be respected, and their titles*

*can't be released until all these matters are resolved. But I'm sure that things will soon be sorted out and we'll all be able to see part 4 of this wonderful OAV series. As for the *MACROSS PLUS* movie, no UK release date has been announced yet but I'm sure that it can't be far away!*

Dear Helen,

This is my first time I've written to an editor. I'm a great *STREET FIGHTER* II fan so here are a few of my questions about the film and pictures I saw which surprised me :

- 1) In no. 4 of *ANIME UK* (now *FX*) I noticed there were two Blankas in the drawing of the whole *STREET FIGHTER* II group on pages 32-33?
- 2) In the game *SUPER STREET FIGHTER* II *TURBO* there is a secret character called Akuma; if they didn't mention anything about him in the magazines then how come he appeared in the animated movie? When they were about to move towards the people in the black car in Calcutta, India, he was by the gate, and when we saw the gate again, he was gone!
- 3) After Ken's dream, a lorry passed his car with the word *CAPCOM* written on the side.
- 4) Why is E. Honda wearing green



SOL BIANCA

sumo clothes instead of blue with light blue stripes?

5) Will there be a follow-up movie, because M. Bison is still alive, and because of Akuma too?

6) Why didn't Zangief, Blanka and the new fighters appear in the movie much?

7) In the movie, the monitor cyborg's face looks a bit like Sagat, don't you think so?

Hope you can answer all of my questions and can you send me something as well, please.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL TSANG,
West Glamorgan, Wales.

HELEN : Well, I'll do my best to answer the questions but I can't 'send you something' - by which I presume you mean free posters, videos, toys, trading cards, etc

- because anything like that that comes into the office is used for competition prizes or given to our staff; we're all fans and we like collecting stuff just as much as you do! Why not enter our competitions and try to win

some of the prizes on offer? I think the sketch shows Blanka twice so you can see how tall he is in relation to other characters, and I think the secret character Akuma had appeared in the game in Japan before the movie came out; revealing him briefly in the movie and

challenging fans to spot him was a little extra link with the game, an in-joke for big SFII fans. The same applies to the truck with the *CAPCOM* logo; because they're the originators of SFII, it's another fun thing for fans to spot. Isn't poor old E. Honda entitled to a change of clothes? Many characters have had alternative colours in different versions of SFII, and the film is just following this tradition in changing some of the clothes a little bit. No announcement has been made yet about a follow-up animated SFII movie, but if the first one makes money it's possible there will be a second, sequel-mania being what it is. Some fighters don't appear much in the film because there was only a limited amount of time and the director and scriptwriter felt it was a better idea to focus on the more popular characters, the 'stars' of the game. And yes, now you mention it I suppose the monitor cyborg does resemble Sagat a little; but it's definitely better-looking!

Dear Helen,
I am a big fan of the manga of Rumiko Takahashi, especially *MAISON IKKOKU*, *RANMA* 1/2, the *MERMAID* series and *ONE POUND GOSPEL*. What I would like to know is, are these manga finished or are they still ongoing series? If so, how does she find the time?

LEE MARTIN,
Bristol, Avon, UK.

HELEN : She works every day for ten to twelve hours and hardly ever takes holidays, that's how. She also has a team of assistants working with her, as many top manga artists do. *MAISON IKKOKU* and *ONE POUND GOSPEL* reached a conclusion some time ago, and *RANMA* 1/2 is coming to an end at the end



DRAGON QUEST

of this year, while the *MERMAID* series may continue as long as she feels there are new ways to explore the theme. Since she's now approaching her twentieth anniversary as a cartoonist, and has produced so many successful series in her long career, I think we can expect even more new *Takahashi* works in future!

Dear Helen,
Ich bin Sailor Frau! Yes, you've guessed it, I've just been watching *SAILOR MOON*, German dub, on ZDF (Astra transponder #33 10.964GHz, Friday 2.220-2.35 p.m.). I'm pretty sure this is going to be a regular slot so it's worth setting your video if you're at work.

So what do I think? well, it's definitely hot, not quite up to O.M.G., and as always slightly let down by the dubbing. German dubbing does, however, seem to be better than the stuff M.V. subjects us to; I suspect it's a much bigger industry over there.

Also, with regard to Stephen Cross' letter regarding mail order comics, may I say that Comics Warehouse is the company to contact. You'll get 3 catalogues free every month, with your comics packed and shipped for less than you'd normally pay. The wall art from 'editions 1000' is definitely worth checking out, as is any Japanese language book incorporating P.V. and Mahjong in the title.

With regard to the anime scene, ordering from the U.S. is never usually a problem, apart from the postage and import duties for LDs. For Japanese LDs Laser Perceptions is great; it is expensive, though.

How about an article on ordering goodies direct from Hong Kong or Japan? All that is required is a few simple sentences: Please could you send me —, my credit card number is —, my address is —; that kind of thing as well as some addresses (please?) Looking through Hobby Japan leaves me lustful but clueless! I can't even work out the preprinted order forms. I'm sure this would find favour with all those of us who have had to lock away our credit cards after looking at *NewType's* catalogue.

Yours P.V. Otakuly,
SIMON LEE,
Marsh Baldon, Oxon, England.

HELEN : That's an interesting idea, Simon; although since both Cantonese and Japanese are usually written in Chinese script, you might need to photocopy the page and paste the sentences into your order; and surely if you are assuming the store clerks can't read English, you would also have to write in the titles in Japanese or Cantonese? But since our clever translator Jonathan



Clements speaks and writes both languages, we'll get him to have a think about it and see what he comes up with.

Dear Helen,
I'm looking for some old friends, but so far haven't been successful. They are Peter and Lorraine Poole and they used to live in Jarrow, Tyne and Wear. I last heard of them when they were living in Scotland, but their phone number is no longer connected. If they read this, or if anyone knows what has happened to them, I would be most grateful if they could get in touch.

Yours,
DAVE ROSS,
South Shields, Tyne & Wear, UK

Dear Helen,
First off I'd like to thank Steve Kyte and Phil Laskey for their autographs at ReConTanimeTed., and you for your informative talk.

This was the first convention I'd been to and I'm really glad I did. I went with £20 (which was, I found out, a minuscule amount compared to what other people had brought) and came back with around - ooh, 43p ... why is everything so god-damned (ahoy Ripley) expensive? The first thing that struck me was how friendly everyone was; my

friend Stuart and I spent many a happy hour talking to people behind the stands. One of my most memorable moments at the convention however was being able to FINALLY see a *RANMA 1/2* OAV, something I had wanted to do for the past 1 1/2 years or so but just hadn't been able to manage. This anime has left me craving for more! I don't see why British anime companies don't rush to buy the rights to release it on video because the longer they wait the more people like me get bored and decide to buy via import, which would mean less profit for them in the future.

I can't wait till ReConTanimeTed 96 and I'll definitely be going. What I want to know though is, why are there never any anime premieres or exhibitions around the Oxford area? It's a whopping great git of a place but everyone (not only in the manga/anime world) seems to forget all about it. It's really inconvenient travelling miles and miles and only beign able to stay one day when you want to stay from the beginning to the end.

Oh, and just before I leave I'd like to tell you about our planned computer fanzine *ANIMESHUN*. It will be PC compatible and edited by myself and Stuart Dobson. Fans of anime and manga can send us any work

they would like included (but no pictures until we can afford a scanner) and ALL will be included. The fanzine will include news, reviews, Special Discussion topics and an 'interactive' section where people who do not agree with others' views or who just want to get in touch with their friends can have a say - a bit like an international penpal fanzine for manga fans where anyone can talk to anyone! If anyone has any ideas or would like to know how to get involved, we'd be happy to hear from them, so could you please print my full address?

Thanks a lot,
IAN HIGTON,
13 Edington Place, Grove, Wantage, Oxon, OX12 0BX

HELEN : Keep me posted on how the fanzine grows and how to access it, Ian - I wish you and Stuart luck with it. I don't know why there aren't any anime premieres or exhibitions round Oxford - you'd have to write to the anime companies and ask them - but I suspect there aren't enough people in the area who would turn out and pay money to make it worth their while. The reason there aren't any anime conventions near Oxford is that no fans in the area have ever run any; so it's over to you, otaku of Oxfordshire!



FANSCENE

CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS

We list all conventions and open club meetings notified to us at least 3 months in advance. The date and name of the event is followed by contact details (an address, email or phone number) and brief details. AFX is not involved in running these events and cannot provide further information - please contact the organisers direct.

EUROPE

EVERY MONTH - LONDON

ANIME CLUB meets at the Daiwa Japan Foundation, London NW1. Meet other gaijin and Japanese otaku in a friendly, sociable setting, watch anime, have a drink. Call Dragon on 0181 202 9038 evenings for more details.

USA

MAR 2 FANIME CON 96, PO Box 642028, San Jose, CA 95164-2028, USA, email abunai@IBM.NET, no further details as yet.

MAR 8-10 KATSUCON NI (2), Katsu Productions Ltd., 1827-7 Grayland Street, Blacksburg, VA 24060, USA, tel (001) 540 953 1699. Many guests, innovative programming, friendly con.

MAY 31-JUNE 2 PROJECT A-KON 7, 3352 Broadway, Ste 470, Garland, TX 75043, USA, email phoenix@cyberramp.net, web <http://www.cyberramp.net/phoenix/> akon. Guests Ben Dunn, Tavisha Wolfgang, Rosearik Rikki, Neil Nadelman and more. Almost 100 dealer tables already sold! 2 large screen video theatres, games, lotsa fun.

RECONTAMINATED

Well, it was a terrific con, but it wasn't until later that we had time to read all the fanzines we were given over the weekend. Thanks to all the artists, writers and editors who thrust their work into our hands, and special congratulations to Andy Hepworth, whose dojinshi **BURNING HIGHWAY** won the convention's award for best fan manga, and Ian Waugh, whose **TOOCLOSE** (recently reviewed in these pages) was highly commended.

FANZINE FILE

We review all fanzines sent to us as and when space permits, providing we have an address which fans can contact to obtain copies. However, our reading competence is restricted to the major European languages, Japanese and Chinese; please bear this in mind when sending us your fanzine!

RED LEOPARD III has 112 packed pages, sandwiched between delectable Phil Laskey covers in either glorious full colour (a limited edition) or less arresting but still

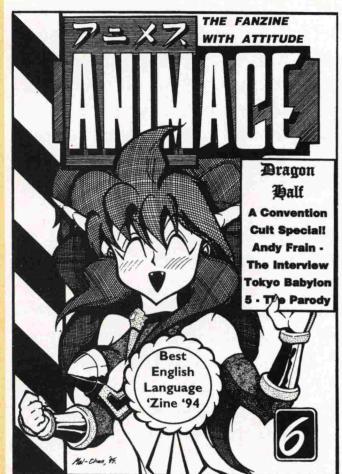
Red Leopard III



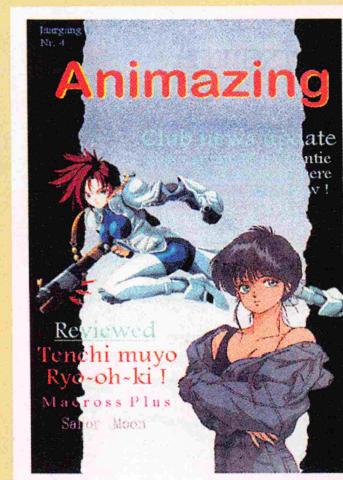
attractive black and white. Between the foreword by yours truly and the afterword by editor Peter Cullen is sandwiched a delectable mix of fact, fiction, humour, and downright insanity, making up one of the best (and best designed) zines of 1995. And what a mine of useful info! If you want to know how to poison someone, Peter J. Evans is your man. After the performance stats for a mobile suit in space? Ask Peter Bird. What's it like sitting up all night at a con watching dominoes fall on film? Jim McLennan knows, and he's willing to tell. And if you eat cheese, snacks or Japanese food, the Leopard team have some advice for you, while editor Peter Cullen has written a wry, funny RIDING BEAN story that must surely be one of the best bits of fanfic this year. You can find out more from,

329 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, Berks., RG40 3JT, UK, or email RedLeopard@hpsound.demon.co.uk

ANIMACE 6 ("At last!") was the cry of at least one fan at ReCon as he grabbed this long-awaited treat! is now under the editorship of Mel Hyland and is its usual bouncy, funny, charming self. This is our current Fanzine of the Year and reading the latest issue you can see just why it won. It's a fate common to fanzine editors that events can catch up and catch you out - the



weekend of #6's release was buzzing with rumours of Andy Frain's departure from Manga Video, so the long interview with him talking about future plans had a weird, almost dreamlike quality about it - but the content is as strong as ever, with plenty of video, game and CD reviews, features and hard information. Simon Dominguez' **TOKYO BABYLON 5** is a timely alternative to the usual seasonal Nativity play - load your teacher up with whatever it takes and get him/her to let the class perform this one! £1.00 plus 50p post & packing from **ANIMACE, c/o Melissa Hyland, Editor, 38 Anchor Road, Tiptree, Colchester, Essex, CO5 0AP, UK.**



ANIMAZING, the fanzine of ANIME WORKGROUP HOLLAND, opens with club news and goes on to feature **TENCHI**, **MACROSS PLUS**, **SAILOR MOON** and more, in an A5 format with some colour photocopies sprinkled through its 20 pages plus stiffer colour covers. It's all in Dutch, has contact details for the group and Dutch anime sources, and is a nice, cleanly designed little zine obviously put together with love. Details from **Sander Peters, Rijksweg 12, 6247 AH Gronsveld, Netherlands**.

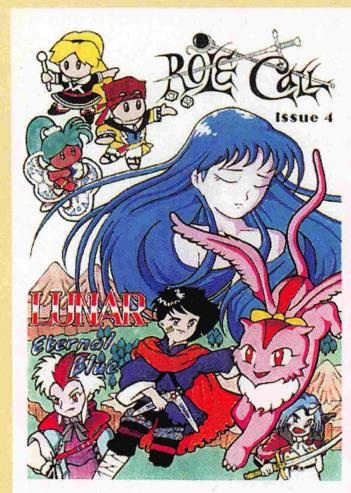
ANIMENIA is another Dutch-language zine, put out by Hiryu and his crew, who are rapidly becoming familiar figures at UK conventions. 48 black and white pages in two-colour covers feature European video releases, Takahashi, City Hunter and mecha special features, game reviews, plus three pages of Euromanga and plenty of fan art. Looks very nearly pro, is well supported by advertising, definitely worth buying if you read Dutch. Contact **ANIMENIA PUBLISHING, Postbus 2048, 3000 CA Rotterdam, Netherlands**.

RAGEON is a dojinshi (fan manga) thrust into our hands by the author and artist, John Ferguson, who'd come all the way from Canada to be at ReCon. He said disarmingly "I know it's not the greatest art in the world, but I love doing it!" And that

really shines through. He's right about it not being the greatest art in the world, but it's cleanly executed and packed with the artist's obvious love for the Japanese medium and for his own universe. He's planned out the story at a staggering 500 pages and just to help you get everything straight in your head there's a special section with character details and story background. The story and characters are derivative of a number of Japanese sources (overlapping multiverses, alternate selves, Zen masters, urban decay and teen angst) but the universe is complex and engagingly put together. John's work is as honest and direct as the guy himself; if you like dojinshi, give it a go. Contact **John at 6501 Sunshine Drive, North Delta, British Columbia, Canada V4E 1P4**.

QUIETSTORM is another dojinshi, handed to me by Robert Lyn Davies, editor of **LEGEND OF THE OVA FIEND** and writer of the story; artist is Dave 'Banzai' Kirwin. Set in another fairly derivative but complex world, the story - which seems to revolve around political/commercial intrigue in the virtual world of the future - doesn't really get going in Part 1, though we get a couple of action sequences and introductions to several of the main characters, as well as a section outlining important background information. The art has some interesting angles and effects; its biggest drawback is the usual fan artist one of limited familiarity with human anatomy, its biggest strength its clean, pared-down line. For more details write to **Q.P.S., 129 Applegarth Avenue, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 6LT, UK**.

ROLE CALL is an RPG fanzine edited by Rachel Ryan, but as well as the usual game reviews and humour it's got a really cute dojinshi strip, soundtrack reviews and a feature on the anime version of **RECORD OF LODDOS WAR**, so there's something for non-RPGers as well. Nicely laid out with a great clutch of artwork, £1.20 from **25 Oakdene Ave., Woolston, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 4NU**.



MIND BREAK



Test your anime and manga knowledge on our range of brainteasers. New fans should be OK with our NEO-OTAKU questions, based on material widely available in the UK and USA; after that - well, it gets a little bit tougher, but hey, true otaku can handle the pressure, right?

NEO-OTAKU

1. What's the title of the second PROJECT A-KO OAV?
2. What's the name of the trophy the characters race for in SCRAMBLE WARS?
3. Who is the director of GREEN LEGEND RAN?
4. What is M. Bison known as in the Japanese STREET FIGHTER II release?

OTAKU

1. How many TV series episodes of LUPIN III have there been?
2. Who directed KO CENTURY BEAST WARRIORS?
3. Who or what is Baltan Sejin?
4. Which is the only anime series to have been repeated in its entirety on Japanese TV?

SUPER-OTAKU

1. Which manga artist created MAROBOSHI PANTY?
2. What is the title of the videotape on which Ai Amano first appears to Yota?
3. Who directed SOL BIANCA 2
4. Who illustrated the UTSUNOMIKO novel on which the anime is based?



LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS
See how you got on ...

NEO-OTAKU :

1. 6. 2. The larval form of a space-craft
3. Daley Wong
4. Nekomi Tech.

OTAKU :

1. JUBEI NINPOCHO
2. Gisaburo Sugii
3. Akio Otsuka
4. Bandai's new anime satellite channel

SUPER-OTAKU :

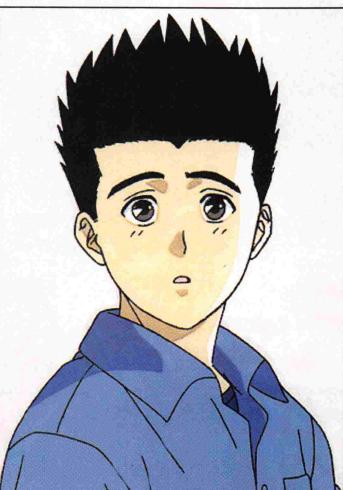
1. NewType Magazine
2. Koichi Ohata, who worked on YAMATO TAKERU live-action and is the artist/creator of CPM Comics' M.D. GEIST, on which John Ott is the colourist
3. Takarazuka, Japan
4. BRAINDER (HEAD), JUMBODY (TORSO & ARMS), LEGSTAR (LEGS)



NEO-OTAKU: 4



OTAKU: 2



SUPER OTAKU: 2

PLEASE NOTE : It takes two or three months to put each issue together so your pen pal request may not appear for some time after you send it to us. Please be patient - all pen pal requests received are printed as soon as possible!

ANGEL WU SAK WING,

4 Ave. Mallefilelle Belle-Rose, Rose Hill, Mauritius : "Hi, I'm 15 and would like to have mates all over the world. I'm crazy of all Japanese mangas and stuff. I really like to draw anime too. All letters will have a reply!"

CHRIS JACKMAN,

3 Albion Terrace, Lexham Road, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE32 2QO, England : "Male, 24, wants to trade, loves VIDEO GIRL AI, Miyazaki/Takahata/Hisashi, SAILOR MOON, SD (and anything ultra cute) soundtracks, scripts, info, Amiga, PC, etc, etc, etc, even 'H' ... Thank you for your time!"

JOE LEE,

94 Turpington Lane, Bromley, Kent, BR2 8JD, England : "Yo folks, I'm 15, mad, obsessed with tea, and wish to communicate with girls, boys, ladies, gents, anything else, from any country - I'm not picky! Likes : arcades, computer games, Rumiko, Toriyama, fantasy anime/manga like RG VEDA, ARIS-LAN, RECORD OF LODOSS WAR (I'm not worthy, I'm not worthy!), CLAMP; action like SF movies & TV series. Want to trade anime/manga merchandise like CDs & wall scrolls and teabags (not a necessity!) Adios amigos."

DUNCAN LAW-GREEN,

1 Whitelands, Rawdon, Leeds, W. Yorks., LS19 6BU, UK. email: dlq@ryouko.demon.co.uk : "Hi! I'm looking to start an anime club in the West Yorkshire area. Can you help? I'm 26; my favourite anime are URUSEI YATSURA, DIRTY PAIR and TENCHI MUYO, favourite manga are OUTLANDERS and APPLESEED. I've just started anime-style drawing and would like to learn tips from any fan artists out there. Hope to hear from you soon."

JEAN-PAUL VIAL,

Strathmore, Hockering Gardens, Woking, Surrey, GU22 7DA, UK : "I'm a 15 year old student and I'm

**OPEN
PALS**

looking for anyone interested in anime and manga. I'm a big fan of DRAGONBALL Z, HOKUTO NO KEN, AKIRA, SAINT SEIYA, LUPIN III movies, but I like most types of manga. I am half French, half Japanese, but I prefer to write in English. I will try to answer all letters, so write soon!"

FRANCISCO GABRIEL PINO GARCIA,

c/Alcalde Gregorio Espino n34 3A, C. P. 36205, Vigo (Pontevedra) Spain : "I'm a Spanish anime and manga fan, my name is Francisco Gabriel. I really like cartoons like DRAGONBALL and RANMA 1/2. I want to correspond with boys and girls who love manga and anime as I do. My favourite manga are 3 x 3 EYES, VIDEO GIRL AI, DRAGON QUEST, CITY HUNTER, BATTLE ANGEL ALITA, JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE and much more. In anime I really like AH! MY GODDESS, MACROSS, MACROSS PLUS, CAPTAIN TSUBASA, CAPTAIN HARLOCK, DOMINION and much more. Please write in English or Spanish!"

FRANCESCA CASASCO,

Via Devani 23, 15057 Tortona (AL), Italy : "21-year-old Italian girl loves anime and manga, in particular VERSAILLES NO BARA, CITY HUNTER, CATS EYE, LADY GEORGIE, CANDY CANDY, VIDEO GIRL AI, HOKUTO NO KEN, LUPIN III ... I also like to play tennis, write, read and draw. I want to correspond with a lot of new friends from all over the world. Please write me lots of letters!"

MARGHERITA BORTOLATO,

via Prati 21, 30033 Noale (VE), Italy : "I am 26 years old and would like male or female penpals preferably over 24 years. Lieji Matsumoto is my favourite author; I also like MACROSS and MACROSS II, MEGAZONE 23, RG VEDA, GUNDAM and many others. Other interests : Japanese culture, martial arts, fantasy and science fiction, mythology, Celtic culture."

SIMON MOON,

55 Furzehill Road, Mutley, Plymouth, Devon PL4 7LB, UK "32 year old male Welsh git would like to correspond/meet/get up to no good with a slim, attractive female fan 22-27 in the Devon/Cornwall area - well, anywhere really. Must have a sense of humour, be into anime and like Southern Comfort and guttrotting cider. Apply with photo."

SILVIO MALAN,

via Nevizzano 18, 14100 Asti, (AT), Italy : "I'm a 17 year old boy who wants a penpal with whom I can correspond in English. I adore manga and games and would love to write to English boys who share my interests"

ANIME CLASSICS



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Series overview: TEKKAMAN BLADE, ORGUESS, AH! MY GODDESS, Anime in Europe, video-games, AH! MY GODDESS



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Series overview: ARISLAN, RG VEDA, GAIARTH; Japanese-Indian co-production RAMAYANA



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US conventions, interviews, Series overview: SOL BIANCA, DEVIL HUNTER YOKO, PATLABOR 2 the movie



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PORCO ROSSO, Homage to Tezuka Osamu, Series Overview: BATTLE ANGEL ALITA, DOMINION 2, US Fandom



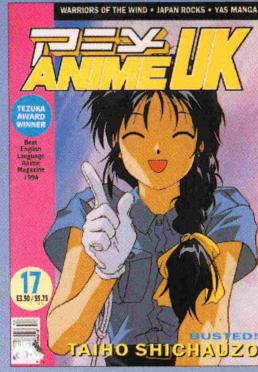
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KO CENTURY BEAST WARRIORS, Toren Smith interview, Series Overview: GUN-BUSTER, URUSEI YATSURA



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TAIHO SHICHAUZO!, The Lion King controversy, Anime Cyberpunk, WARRIORS OF THE WIND,



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The New Generations - MACROSS; Report - GAMES CAPSULE; Cyberbabe - ARMITAGE III



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NEW SERIES - 5
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NEW SERIES - 6
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Write to: Avalon Court, Star Road, Partridge Green, West Sussex RH13 8RY

US readers: Heritage Press, 3150 State Line Road, North Bend, Ohio 45052

AnimeFX

Reader JOHN J. GALLIMORE of Prestwich, Manchester, UK, feels strongly on one of the hot topics of UK fandom.

Dear Helen,

I write to protest about what appears to be becoming a national sport among the readers of your fine publication: Mangabashing. Hardly a month goes by without one of your readers whingeing that Manga [Entertainment] is "yuk" or complaining that they don't release this or do that. The recent RANMA 1/2 debate just goes to prove my point - although I think it has finally filtered through that Manga Entertainment (ME) do not own the UK rights. I'm the first to admit that ME don't always release what fans always want; I'll also wager that half of the people who slag Manga down and insist on RANMA and DBZ are just leaping on the bandwagon because it makes them feel like a 'real' anime fan. ME's recent release schedule has gone some way to giving fans what they want, most notably the rest of the A-KO movies and the PATLABOR movies (in sub and dub in the case of the

latter, so let's not start that one). As I understand Bubblegum Crash is yet to come.

What worries me is what are these anime 'fans' doing while waiting for the whole of the RANMA series to be released (as an example)? As you pointed out to A. Bains in issue 7, we in the UK have hardly seen one tenth of what is out there. I currently own about 60 tapes (collected over two years) of anime stuff - from all companies, subbed and dubbed - and I buy anime because I like it. All of it. Not just a piece here and a piece there. I'll admit that ME's conduct has been a little underhand in the past (I'll just say SUPER PLAY - you know what I mean) but before the advent of Manga Video you could only buy videos imported from specialist shops, and for a staggering amount of dosh. I suppose you could say that ME were the big bang that caused the ever expanding universe of the UK anime scene. (Yes, I know it was there before, but would it have been as popular if not for Manga Video?) As a member of the UK anime scene I feel I have a secret identity; we all know the delights we derive from watching

anime and manga, it is a feeling that's hard to explain to the uninitiated. I think that, rather than criticise companies for what they don't release, we should be sampling the stuff that is around; let's face it, you don't know what you like until you try it.

JOHN J. GALLIMORE

SOAP BOX

HELEN : American fans can relate to this letter - just substitute the name 'Streamline Pictures' for Manga Entertainment! High-profile figures make easy targets, especially when they stick firmly to their own agenda and make no apology to those who disagree. Of course it goes with the territory of being a public company, magazine, fanzine or whatever to take the criticism that comes your way - after all, people are entitled to their opinion; but you have some good points, John, and I'm sure this will give other readers something to think and talk about.



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Above: Ah My Goddess by Ian Waugh, Lincs, UK.

Above left: Character montage by W. Hitchmough

Far left: Devil Hunter Ne-Chan by Andy Hepworth, Edinburgh, UK.

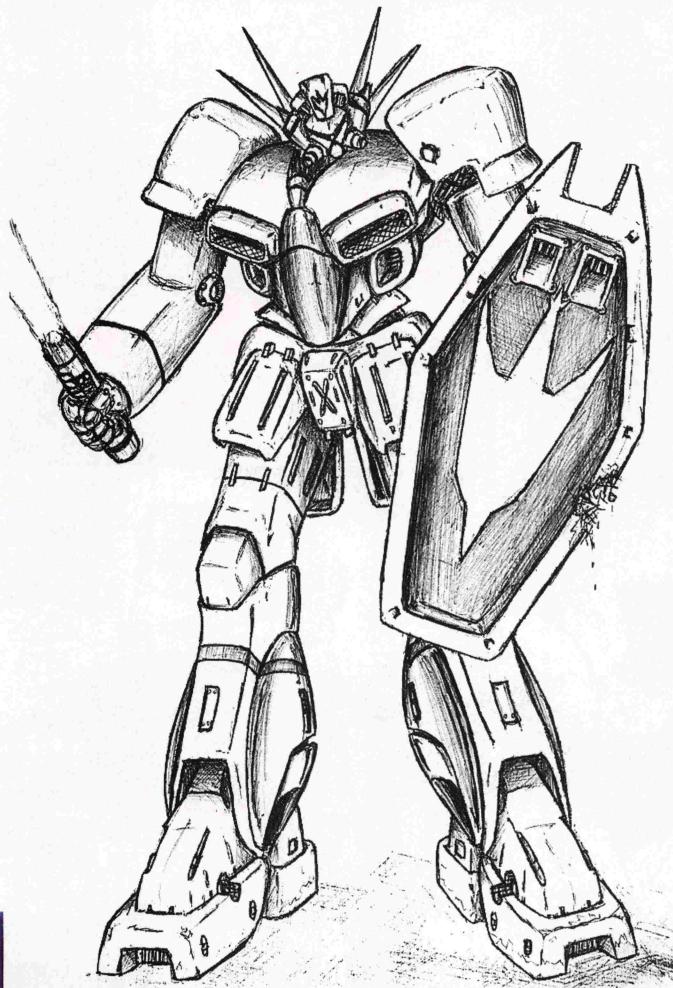
(This was the mascot pic on last issues Editorial page, but at that small scale the tones filled in badly, so we thought you'd like to see it as Andy intended.)

Left: Akane and P-Chan (Ranma 1/2) by Andrea Walker, Leeds, UK.

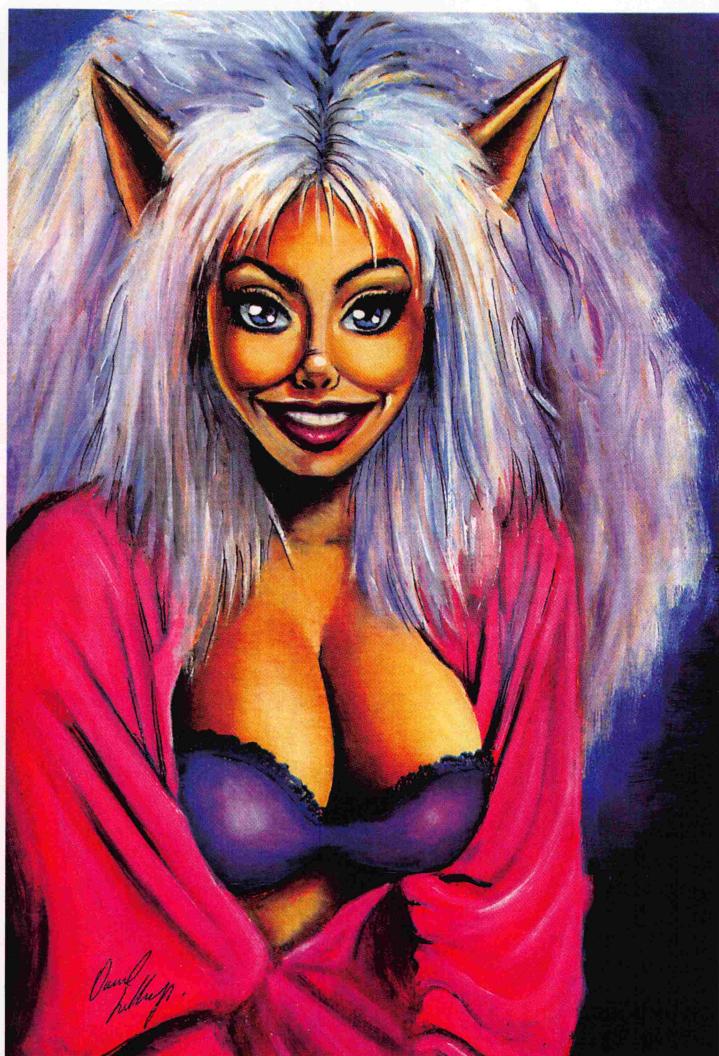




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ALBERT SCHÜTT



Top left: *Guyver* by Jenny To,
London, UK.

Top right: *Untitled* by Albert
Schütt, Brussum,
Netherlands

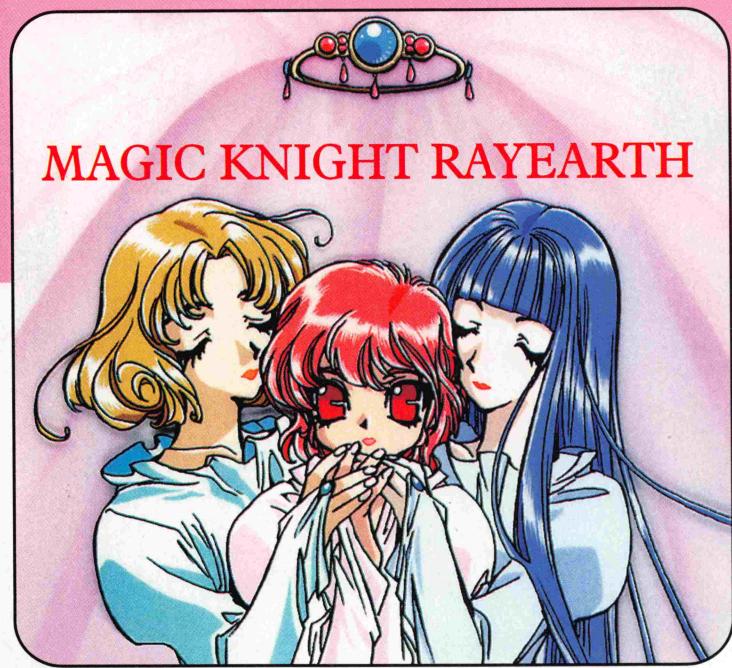
Left: *Puma Twin (take your
pick!)* by David Jeffreys,
Swansea, UK

Right: *DNA2* by Douglas
Hudson, Rugby, UK



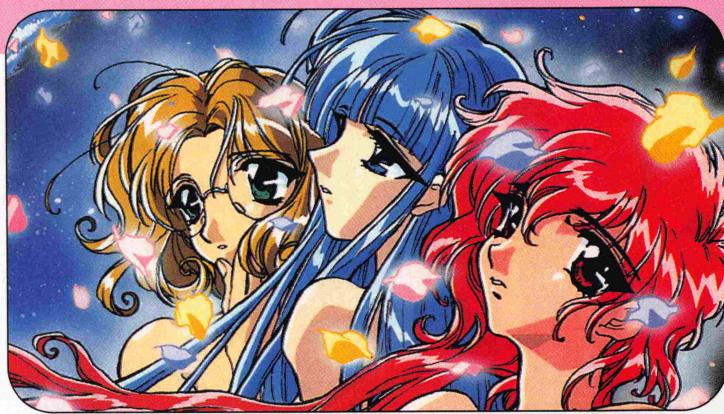


BACK COVER ANIME GALLERY



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